THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

DISCARDED

GIFT OF

FREDERIC THOMAS BLANCHARD
FOR THE
ENGLISH READING ROOM

MC 3236622

ENGLISH READING ROOM

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/writingsofprospe03meriiala

THE WRITINGS OF

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

COMPRISING HIS

NOVELS, TALES, AND LETTERS TO AN UNKNOWN

WITH

An Essay on the Genius and Achievement of the Author

By GEORGE SAINTSBURY, M.A.

COMPLETE IN EIGHT VOLUMES

P. Simboldi inv. Copyright 1905 by George E. Croscup Wm Buland sc

THE NOVELS, TALES AND LETTERS
OF
PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

EDITED BY PROF. GEORGE SAINTSBURY, M.A.

COMPLETE IN EIGHT VOLUMES

THE MOSAIC

Comprising
MATEO FALCONE and OTHER TALES

Translated by
EMILY MARY WALLER AND
MARY HELENA DEY

With Illustrations by
J. LE BLANT, P. SINIBALDI
LUC OLIVIER MERSON, MYRBACH
ED. DE BEAUMONT AND LALAUZE

NEW YORK

FRANK S. HOLBY

MCMVI

Roger walked about the room with his head bent on his breast, his eyes half closed and filled with tears.

Etched by Em. Buland from a painting by P. Sinibaldi.

THE NOVELS, TALES AND LETTERS
OF
PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

EDITED BY PROF. GEORGE SAINTSBURY, M.A.

COMPLETE IN EIGHT VOLUMES

THE MOSAIC

Comprising
MATEO FALCONE and OTHER TALES

Translated by
EMILY MARY WALLER AND
MARY HELENA DEY

With Illustrations by
J. LE BLAUT, P. SINIBALDI
LUC OLIVIER MERSON, MYRBACH
ED. DE BEAUMONT AND LALAUZE

NEW YORK PHILADELPHIA

FRANK S. HOLBY

MCMVI

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME III.

Roger walked about the room with his head bent on his breast, his eyes half closed and filled with tears. (p. 113) . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Etched by Em. Buland from a painting by P. Sinibald

PAGE

Giuseppa ran after Mateo, and seized him by the arm. "He is your son," she said 23

Etched by Gery Bichard from a painting by Luc Olivier Merson

Then she struggled from his embrace, and, snatching the Etruscan vase, broke it into a thousand pieces on the floor 168

Etched by Lalauze from a painting by Ed. de Beaumont

MATEO FALCONE

MATEO FALCONE

COMING out of Porto-Vecchio, and turning north-west toward the centre of the island, the ground is seen to rise very rapidly, and, after three hours' walk by tortuous paths, blocked by large boulders of rocks, and sometimes cut by ravines, the traveller finds himself on the edge of a very broad *mâquis,* or open plateau. These plateaus are the home of the Corsican shepherds, and the resort of those who have come in conflict with the law. The Corsican peasant sets fire to a certain stretch of forest to spare himself the trouble of manuring his lands: so much the worse if the flames spread further than is needed. Whatever happens, he is sure to have a good harvest by sowing upon this ground, fertilised by the ashes of the trees which grew on it. When the corn is gathered, they leave the straw because it is too much trouble to gather. The roots, which remain in the earth without being consumed, sprout, in the following spring, into very thick shoots, which, in a few years, reach to a height of seven or eight feet. It is this kind of under-

wood which is called *mâquis*. It is composed of different kinds of trees and shrubs mixed up and entangled as in a wild state of nature. It is only with hatchet in hand that man can open a way through, and there are *mâquis* so dense and so thick that not even the wild sheep can penetrate them.

If you have killed a man, go into the *mâquis* of Porto-Vecchio, with a good gun and powder and shot, and you will live there in safety. Do not forget to take a brown cloak, furnished with a hood, which will serve as a coverlet and mattress. The shepherds will give you milk, cheese, chestnuts, and you will have nothing to fear from the hand of the law, nor from the relatives of the dead, except when you go down into the town to renew your stock of ammunition.

When I was in Corsica in 18— Mateo Falcone's house was half a league from this *mâquis*. He was a comparatively rich man for that country, living handsomely, that is to say, without doing anything, from the produce of his herds, which the shepherds, a sort of nomadic people, led to pasture here and there over the mountains. When I saw him, two years after the event that I am about to tell, he seemed about fifty years of age at the most. Imagine a small, but robust man, with jet-black, curly hair, an

aquiline nose, thin lips, large and piercing eyes, and a deeply tanned complexion. His skill in shooting passed for extraordinary, even in his country, where there are so many crack shots. For example, Mateo would never fire on a sheep with swanshot, but, at one hundred and twenty paces, he would strike it with a bullet in its head or shoulders as he chose. He could use his gun at night as easily as by day, and I was told the following example of his adroitness, which will seem almost incredible to those who have not travelled in Corsica. A lighted candle was placed behind a transparent piece of paper, as large as a plate, at eighty paces off. He put himself into position, then the candle was extinguished, and in a minute's time, in complete darkness, he shot and pierced the paper three times out of four.

With this conspicuous talent Mateo Falcone had earned a great reputation. He was said to be a loyal friend, but a dangerous enemy; in other respects he was obliging and gave alms, and he lived at peace with everybody in the district of Porto-Vecchio. But it is told of him that when at Corte, where he had found his wife, he had very quickly freed himself of a rival reputed to be equally formidable in love as in war; at any rate, people attributed to

Mateo a certain gunshot which surprised his rival while in the act of shaving before a small mirror hung in his window. After the affair had been hushed up, Mateo married. His wife Giuseppa at first presented him with three daughters, which enraged him, but finally a son came whom he named Fortunato; he was the hope of the family, the inheritor of its name. The girls were well married; their father could reckon in case of need upon the poniards and rifles of his sons-in-law. The son was only ten years old, but he had already shown signs of a promising disposition.

One autumn day Mateo and his wife set out early to visit one of their flocks in a clearing of the *mâquis*. Little Fortunato wanted to go with them, but the clearing was too far off; besides, it was necessary that someone should stay and mind the house; so his father refused. We shall soon see that he had occasion to repent of this.

He had been gone several hours and little Fortunato was quietly lying out in the sunshine, looking at the blue mountains, and thinking that on the following Sunday he would be going to town to have dinner at his uncle's, the corporal,*

* Corporals were formerly the chief officers of the Corsican communes after they had rebelled against the feudal lords. To-day the name is still given sometimes to a man who, by his property, his connections and his clients, exercises influence, and a kind of effective

when his meditations were suddenly interrupted by the firing of a gun. He got up and turned toward that side of the plain from which the sound had proceeded. Other shots followed, fired at irregular intervals, and each time they came nearer and nearer until he saw a man on the path which led from the plain to Mateo's house. He wore a pointed cap like a mountaineer, he was bearded, and clothed in rags, and he dragged himself along with difficulty, leaning on his gun. He had just received a gunshot in the thigh.

This man was a *bandit* (Corsican for one who is proscribed) who, having set out at night to get some powder from the town, had fallen on the way into an ambush of Corsican soldiers.* After a vigorous defence he had succeeded in escaping, but they gave chase hotly, firing at him from rock to rock. He was only a little in advance of the soldiers, and his wound made it out of the question for him to reach the *mâquis* before being overtaken.

He came up to Fortunato and said—

magistracy over a *pieve*, or canton. By an ancient custom Corsicans divide themselves into five castes: *gentlemen* (of whom some are of higher, *magnifiques*, some of lower, *signori*, estate), corporals, citizens, plebeians and foreigners.

* *Voltigeurs:* a body raised of late years by the Government, which acts in conjunction with the gendarmes in the maintenance of order.

"Are you the son of Mateo Falcone?"

"Yes."

"I am Gianetto Sanpiero. I am pursued by the yellow-collars.* Hide me, for I can not go any further."

"But what will my father say if I hide you without his permission?"

"He will say that you did right."

"How do you know?"

"Hide me quickly; they are coming."

"Wait till my father returns."

"Good Lord! how can I wait? They will be here in five minutes. Come, hide me, or I will kill you."

Fortunato replied with the utmost coolness—

"Your gun is unloaded, and there are no more cartridges in your *carchera.*"†

"I have my stiletto."

"But could you run as fast as I can?"

With a bound he put himself out of reach.

"You are no son of Mateo Falcone! Will you let me be taken in front of his house?"

The child seemed moved.

"What will you give me if I hide you?" he said, drawing nearer.

* The uniform of the *voltigeurs* was brown with a yellow collar.

† A leather belt which served the joint purposes of a cartridge-box and pocket for despatches and orders.

The bandit felt in the leather pocket that hung from his side and took out a five-franc piece, which he had put aside, no doubt, for powder. Fortunato smiled at the sight of the piece of silver, and, seizing hold of it, he said to Gianetto—

"Don't be afraid."

He quickly made a large hole in a haystack which stood close by the house. Gianetto crouched down in it, and the child covered him up so as to leave a little breathing space, and yet in such a way as to make it impossible for anyone to suspect that the hay concealed a man. He acted, further, with the ingenious cunning of the savage. He fetched a cat and her kittens and put them on the top of the haystack to make believe that it had not been touched for a long time. Then he carefully covered over with dust the blood-stains which he had noticed on the path near the house, and, this done, he lay down again in the sun with the utmost sangfroid.

Some minutes later six men with brown uniform with yellow collars, commanded by an adjutant, stood before Mateo's door. This adjutant was a distant relative of the Falcones. (It is said that further degrees of relationship are recognised in Corsica than anywhere else.) His name was Tiodoro Gamba; he was an ener-

getic man, greatly feared by the banditti, and had already hunted out many of them.

"Good day, youngster," he said, coming up to Fortunato. "How you have grown! Did you see a man pass just now?"

"Oh, I am not yet so tall as you, cousin," the child replied, with a foolish look.

"You soon will be. But, tell me, have you not seen a man pass by?"

"Have I seen a man pass by?"

"Yes, a man with a pointed black velvet cap and a waistcoat embroidered in red and yellow."

"A man with a pointed cap and a waistcoat embroidered in scarlet and yellow?"

"Yes; answer sharply and don't repeat my questions."

"The priest passed our door this morning on his horse Piero. He asked me how papa was, and I replied——"

"You are making game of me, you rascal. Tell me at once which way Gianetto went, for it is he we are after; I am certain he took this path."

"How do you know that?"

"How do I know that? I know you have seen him."

"How can one see passers-by when one is asleep?"

"You were not asleep, you little demon: the gunshots would wake you."

"You think, then, cousin, that your guns make noise enough? My father's rifle makes much more noise."

"May the devil take you, you young scamp. I am absolutely certain you have seen Gianetto. Perhaps you have even hidden him. Here, you fellows, go into the house, and see if our man is not there. He could only walk on one foot, and he has too much common sense, the villain, to have tried to reach the *mâquis* limping. Besides, the traces of blood stop here."

"Whatever will papa say?" Fortunato asked, with a chuckle. "What will he say when he finds out that his house has been searched during his absence?"

"Do you know that I can make you change your tune, you scamp?" cried the adjutant Gamba, seizing him by the ear. "Perhaps you will speak when you have had a thrashing with the flat of a sword."

Fortunato kept on laughing derisively.

"My father is Mateo Falcone," he said significantly.

"Do you know, you young scamp, that I can take you away to Corte or to Bastia? I shall put you in a dungeon, on a bed of straw,

with your feet in irons, and I shall guillotine you if you do not tell me where Gianetto Sanpiero is."

The child burst out laughing at this ridiculous menace.

"My father is Mateo Falcone," he repeated.

"Adjutant, do not let us embroil ourselves with Mateo," one of the soldiers whispered.

Gamba was evidently embarrassed. He talked in a low voice with his soldiers, who had already been all over the house. It was not a lengthy operation, for a Corsican hut only consists of a single square room. The furniture comprises a table, benches, boxes and utensils for cooking and hunting. All this time little Fortunato caressed his cat, and seemed, maliciously, to enjoy the confusion of his cousin and the soldiers.

One soldier came up to the haycock. He looked at the cat and carelessly stirred the hay with his bayonet, shrugging his shoulders as though he thought the precaution ridiculous. Nothing moved, and the face of the child did not betray the least agitation.

The adjutant and his band were in despair; they looked solemnly out over the plain, half inclined to return the way they had come; but their chief, convinced that threats would produce

no effect upon the son of Falcone, thought he would make one last effort by trying the effect of favours and presents.

"My boy," he said, "you are a wide-awake young dog, I can see. You will get on. But you play a dangerous game with me; and, if I did not want to give pain to my cousin Mateo, devil take it! I would carry you off with me."

"Bah!"

"But, when my cousin returns I shall tell him all about it, and he will give you the whip till he draws blood for having told me lies."

"How do you know that?"

"You will see. But, look here, be a good lad and I will give you something."

"You had better go and look for Gianetto in the *mâquis,* cousin, for if you stay any longer it will take a cleverer fellow than you to catch him."

The adjutant drew a watch out of his pocket, a silver watch worth quite ten crowns. He watched how little Fortunato's eyes sparkled as he looked at it, and he held out the watch at the end of its steel chain.

"You rogue," he said, "you would like to have such a watch as this hung round your neck, and to go and walk up and down the streets of

Porto-Vecchio as proud as a peacock; people would ask you the time, and you would reply, 'Look at my watch!'"

"When I am grown up, my uncle the corporal will give me a watch."

"Yes; but your uncle's son has one already —not such a fine one as this, however—for he is younger than you."

The boy sighed.

"Well, would you like this watch, kiddy?"

Fortunato ogled the watch out of the corner of his eyes, just as a cat does when a whole chicken is given to it. It dares not pounce upon the prey, because it is afraid a joke is being played on it, but it turns its eyes away now and then, to avoid succumbing to the temptation, licking its lips all the time as though to say to its master, "What a cruel joke you are playing on me!"

The adjutant Gamba, however, seemed really willing to give the watch. Fortunato did not hold out his hand; but he said to him with a bitter smile—

"Why do you make fun of me?"

"I swear I am not joking. Only tell me where Gianetto is, and this watch is yours."

Fortunato smiled incredulously, and fixed his black eyes on those of the adjutant. He

tried to find in them the faith he would fain have in his words.

"May I lose my epaulettes," cried the adjutant, "if I do not give you the watch upon that condition! I call my men to witness, and then I can not retract."

As he spoke, he held the watch nearer and nearer until it almost touched the child's pale cheeks. His face plainly expressed the conflict going on in his mind between covetousness and the claims of hospitality. His bare breast heaved violently almost to suffocation. All the time the watch dangled and twisted and even hit the tip of his nose. By degrees he raised his right hand toward the watch, his finger ends touched it; and its whole weight rested on his palm although the adjutant still held the end of the chain loosely. . . . The watch face was blue. . . . The case was newly polished. . . . It seemed blazing in the sun like fire. . . . The temptation was too strong.

Fortunato raised his left hand at the same time, and pointed with his thumb over his shoulder to the haycock against which he was leaning. The adjutant understood him immediately, and let go the end of the chain. Fortunato felt himself sole possessor of the watch. He jumped up with the agility of a deer, and stood ten paces

distant from the haycock, which the soldiers at once began to upset.

It was not long before they saw the hay move, and a bleeding man came out, poniard in hand; when, however, he tried to rise to his feet his stiffening wound prevented him from standing. He fell down. The adjutant threw himself upon him and snatched away his dagger. He was speedily and strongly bound, in spite of his resistance.

Gianetto was bound and laid on the ground like a bundle of fagots. He turned his head toward Fortunato, who had come up to him.

"Son of——," he said to him more in contempt than in anger.

The boy threw to him the silver piece that he had received from him, feeling conscious that he no longer deserved it; but the outlaw took no notice of the action. He merely said in a cool voice to the adjutant—

"My dear Gamba, I can not walk; you will be obliged to carry me to the town."

"You could run as fast as a kid just now," his captor retorted brutally. "But don't be anxious, I am glad enough to have caught you: I would carry you for a league on my own back and not feel tired. All the same, my friend, we will make a litter for you out of the branches

and your cloak. The farm at Crespoli will provide us with horses."

"All right," said the prisoner; "I hope you will put a little straw on your litter to make it easier for me."

While the soldiers were busy, some making a rough stretcher out of chestnut boughs and others dressing Gianetto's wound, Mateo Falcone and his wife suddenly appeared in a turning of the path from the *mâquis*. The wife came in bending laboriously under the weight of a huge sack of chestnuts, while her husband jaunted up carrying his gun in one hand, and a second gun slung in his shoulder-belt. It is considered undignified for a man to carry any other burden but his weapons.

When he saw the soldiers, Mateo's first thought was that they had come to arrest him. But he had no ground for this fear, he had never quarrelled with the law. On the contrary he bore a good reputation. He was, as the saying is, particularly well thought of. But he was a Corsican, and mountain bred, and there are but few Corsican mountaineers who, if they search their memories sufficiently, can not recall some little peccadillo, some gunshot, or dagger thrust, or such-like bagatelle. Mateo's conscience was clearer than most, for it was fully ten years since

he had pointed his gun at any man; yet at the same time he was cautious, and he prepared to make a brave defence if needs be.

"Wife, put down your sack," he said, "and keep yourself in readiness."

She obeyed immediately. He gave her the gun which was slung over his shoulder, as it was likely to be the one that would inconvenience him the most. He held the other gun in readiness, and proceeded leisurely toward the house by the side of the trees which bordered the path, ready to throw himself behind the largest trunk for cover, and to fire at the least sign of hostility. His wife walked close behind him holding her reloaded gun and her cartridges. It was the duty of a good housewife, in case of a conflict, to reload her husband's arms.

On his side, the adjutant was very uneasy at the sight of Mateo advancing thus upon them with measured steps, his gun pointed and finger on trigger.

"If it happens that Gianetto is related to Mateo," thought he, "or he is his friend, and he means to protect him, two of his bullets will be put into two of us as sure as a letter goes to the post, and he will aim at me in spite of our kinship! . . ."

In this perplexity, he put on a bold face and

went forward alone toward Mateo to tell him what had happened, greeting him like an old acquaintance. But the brief interval which separated him from Mateo seemed to him of terribly long duration.

"Hullo! Ah! my old comrade," he called out. "How are you, old fellow? I am your cousin Gamba."

Mateo did not say a word, but stood still; and while the other was speaking, he softly raised the muzzle of his rifle in such a manner that by the time the adjutant came up to him it was pointing skyward.

"Good day, brother," * said the adjutant, holding out his hand. "It is a very long time since I saw you."

"Good day, brother."

"I just called in when passing to say 'good day' to you and cousin Pepa. We have done a long tramp to-day; but we must not complain of fatigue, for we have taken a fine catch. We have got hold of Gianetto Sanpiero."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Giuseppa. "He stole one of our milch goats last week."

Gamba rejoiced at these words.

"Poor devil!" said Mateo, "he was hungry."

"The fellow fought like a lion," continued

*The ordinary greeting of Corsicans.

the adjutant, slightly nettled. "He killed one of the men, and, not content to stop there, he broke Corporal Chardon's arm; but that is not of much consequence, for he is only a Frenchman. . . . Then he hid himself so cleverly that the devil could not have found him. If it had not been for my little cousin Fortunato, I should never have discovered him."

"Fortunato?" cried Mateo.

"Fortunato?" repeated Giuseppa.

"Yes; Gianetto was concealed in your haycock there, but my little cousin showed me his trick. I will speak of him to his uncle the corporal, who will send him a nice present as a reward. And both his name and yours will be in the report which I shall send to the superintendent."

"Curse you!" cried Mateo under his breath.

By this time they had rejoined the company. Gianetto was already laid on his litter, and they were ready to set out. When he saw Mateo in Gamba's company he smiled a strange smile; then, turning toward the door of the house, he spat on the threshold.

"It is the house of a traitor!" he exclaimed.

No man but one willing to die would have dared to utter the word "traitor" in connection with Falcone. A quick stroke from a dagger,

without need for a second, would have immediately wiped out the insult. But Mateo made no other movement beyond putting his hand to his head like a dazed man.

Fortunato went into the house when he saw his father come up. He reappeared shortly carrying a jug of milk, which he offered with downcast eyes to Gianetto.

"Keep off me!" roared the outlaw.

Then, turning to one of the soldiers, he said—

"Comrade, give me a drink of water."

The soldier placed the flask in his hands, and the bandit drank the water given him by a man with whom he had but now exchanged gunshots. He then asked that his hands might be tied crossed over his breast instead of behind his back.

"I prefer," he said, "to lie down comfortably."

They granted him his request. Then, at a sign from the adjutant, they set out, first bidding adieu to Mateo, who answered never a word, and descended at a quick pace toward the plain.

Well-nigh ten minutes elapsed before Mateo opened his mouth. The child looked uneasily first at his mother, then at his father, who leant on his gun, looking at him with an expression of concentrated anger.

"Well, you have made a pretty beginning," said Mateo at last in a voice calm, but terrifying, to those who knew the man.

"Father," the boy cried out, with tears in his eyes, just ready to fall at his knees.

"Out of my sight!" shouted Mateo.

The child stopped motionless a few steps off his father, and began to sob.

Giuseppa came near him. She had just seen the end of the watch-chain hanging from out his shirt.

"Who gave you that watch?" she asked severely.

"My cousin the adjutant."

Falcone seized the watch, and threw it against a stone with such force that it broke into a thousand pieces.

"Woman," he said, "is this my child?"

Giuseppa's brown cheeks flamed brick-red.

"What are you saying, Mateo? Do you know to whom you are speaking?"

"Yes, very well. This child is the first traitor of his race."

Fortunato's sobs and hiccoughs redoubled, and Falcone kept his lynx eyes steadily fixed on him. At length he struck the ground with the butt end of his gun; then he flung it across his shoulder, retook the way to the *mâquis,* and or-

Giuseppa ran after Mateo, and seized him by the arm. "He is your son," she said. . . .

Etched by Gery Bichard from a painting by Luc Olivier Merson.

"Well, you have made a pretty beginning," said Mateo at last in a voice calm, but terrifying, to those who knew the man.

"Father," the boy cried out, with tears in his eyes, just ready to fall at his knees.

"Out of my sight!" shouted Mateo.

The child stopped motionless a few steps off his father, and began to sob.

Giuseppa came near him. She had just seen the end of the watch-chain hanging from out his shirt.

"Who gave you that watch?" she asked severely.

"My cousin the adjutant."

Falcone seized the watch, and threw it against a stone with such force that it broke into a thousand pieces.

"Woman," he said, "is this my child?"

Giuseppa's brown cheeks flamed brick-red.

"What are you saying, Mateo? Do you know to whom you are speaking?"

"Yes, very well. This child is the first traitor of his race."

Fortunatous hits and hiccoughs redoubled, and Falcone kept his lynx eyes steadily fixed on him. At length he struck the ground with the butt end of his gun; then he flung it across his shoulder, retook the way to the *mâquis*, and or-

Luc Olivier Merson inv Copyright 1905 by Frank S. Holley Géry Bichard sc

dered Fortunato to follow him. The child obeyed.

Giuseppa ran after Mateo, and seized him by the arm.

"He is your son," she said in a trembling voice, fixing her black eyes on those of her husband, as though to read all that was passing in his mind.

"Leave go," replied Mateo; "I am his father."

Giuseppa kissed her son, and went back crying into the hut. She threw herself on her knees before an image of the Virgin, and prayed fervently. When Falcone had walked about two hundred yards along the path he stopped at a little ravine and went down into it. He sounded the ground with the butt end of his gun, and found it soft and easy to dig. The spot seemed suitable to his purpose.

"Fortunato, go near to that large rock."

The boy did as he was told, then knelt down.

"Father, father, do not kill me!"

"Say your prayers!" repeated Mateo in a terrible voice.

The child repeated the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, stammering and sobbing. The father said "Amen!" in a firm voice at the close of each prayer.

"Are those all the prayers you know?"

"I know also the Ave Maria and Litany, that my aunt taught me, father."

"It is long, but never mind."

The child finished the Litany in a faint voice.

"Have you finished?"

"Oh, father, forgive me! forgive me! I will never do it again. I will beg my cousin the corporal with all my might to pardon Gianetto!"

He went on imploring. Mateo loaded his rifle and took aim.

"May God forgive you!" he said.

The boy made a frantic effort to get up and clasp his father's knees, but he had no time. Mateo fired, and Fortunato fell stone dead.

Without throwing a single glance at the body, Mateo went back to his house to fetch a spade with which to bury his son. He had only returned a little way along the path when he met Giuseppa, who had run out alarmed by the sound of firing.

"What have you done?" she cried.

"Justice!"

"Where is he?"

"In the ravine; I am going to bury him. He died a Christian. I shall have a mass sung for him. Let someone tell my son-in-law Tiodoro Bianchi to come and live with us."

1829

THE VISION OF CHARLES XI

Vision de Charles XI

THE VISION OF CHARLES XI

"There are more things in heav'n and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

SHAKSPEARE: *Hamlet.*

THOUGH people laugh at visions and supernatural apparitions, several have been too well authenticated to be discredited, for, should one be consistent, it would be necessary to ignore the whole witness of historic evidence.

A correctly drawn-up report, signed by four reliable witnesses, is the guarantee of the truth of the incident about to be related. I should add that the prediction set forth in this report was so set forth and cited a very long time before the events occurred in our days which seemed to fulfil it.

Charles XI, father of the famous Charles XII, was a most despotic king, but at the same time the wisest of the monarchs who have reigned over Sweden. He restricted the overbearing privileges of the nobility, abolished the power of the Senate, and created laws by his own au-

thority; in fact, he changed the constitution of the country, which before was an oligarchy, and compelled the states to vest the absolute control in him. He was, besides, an enlightened man, steadfastly attached to the Lutheran religion, brave, of an inflexible, self-contained, decided character, and entirely devoid of imagination.

He had just lost his wife, Ulrique Eléonore. Although it is said that his severity had hastened her end, he held her in esteem, and appeared more affected by her death than would have been expected of a man so hard of heart. After that event he grew still more taciturn and gloomy than before, and gave himself up to work with an application that showed an urgent desire to dispel sad thoughts.

At the close of one autumn evening he was sitting in his private apartment in the Stockholm Palace, in his dressing-gown and slippers, before a great fire. With him was his chamberlain, Count Brahé, who was one of his most favoured courtiers, and his physician, Baumgarten, who, it may be remarked in passing, set up for a sceptic, and who would have liked people to disbelieve in everything but in medicine. This night he had been summoned to advise on some slight ailment.

The evening lengthened, but contrary to his

habit the King made no sign of dismissal to his companions. He sat in deep silence, his head lowered, and his eyes fixed upon the burning logs, wearied of their company, but afraid, without knowing why, of being left alone. Count Brahé had shrewdly observed that his presence was distasteful to the King, and had several times hinted that he feared His Majesty was in need of repose; but the King had signified by a gesture that he wished him to remain. The physician, in his turn, spoke of the ill-effects to health of keeping late hours. Charles only muttered, "Stay where you are; I have no desire to sleep yet."

At this stage the courtiers tried several different topics of conversation, but all fell flat at the end of the second or third sentence. It was evident that His Majesty was in one of his black moods, and in such circumstance the position of a courtier is decidedly delicate. Count Brahé, suspecting that the King was brooding over the loss of his wife, gazed for some time at the portrait of the Queen which hung on the wall of the room, and remarked with a deep sigh—

"What an excellent likeness! Just the expression she wore, so majestic and yet so gentle."

"Bah!" the King broke in rudely. "That portrait is too flattering. The Queen was ugly."

He was always suspicious of there being underlying reproaches whenever anyone mentioned her name in his presence. Then, vexed at his harshness, he rose and paced the room to hide a blush of shame. He stopped in front of the window which looked on to the courtyard.

It was a dark night and the moon was in its first quarter. The palace in which the Kings of Sweden now reside was not then finished, so that Charles XI, who had begun it, lived then in the old palace on the promontory of Ritterholm overlooking the Lake Moëler. It was a vast building in the form of a horse-shoe. The King's cabinet was at one of the extremities, and nearly opposite it was the large audience hall where Parliament assembled to receive communications from the Crown.

The windows of this chamber appeared to be illuminated with a bright light. This struck the King as strange, but at first he thought the light might be produced by the torch of some valet. Still, what could anybody be doing there at such an hour, and in a room which had not been opened for some time? Besides, the light was too bright to proceed from a single torch. It might be the work of an incendiary, but

there was no smoke, and the windows were not broken.

Charles watched the windows some time in silence. No sound could be heard; everything betokened simply an illumination. Meanwhile Count Brahé extended his hand toward the bell-rope to summon a page in order to send him to find out the cause of this singular light, but the King stopped him. "I will go to the hall myself," he said.

Whilst he spoke they saw his face grow pale with superstitious fear; but he went out with a firm tread, followed by the chamberlain and physician, each holding a lighted candle.

Baumgarten went to rouse the sleeping porter who had charge of the keys with an order from the King to open immediately the doors of the assembly hall. The man was greatly surprised at this unexpected order. He dressed himself quickly, and joined the King with his bunch of keys. At first he opened the door of a gallery which was used as an antechamber or private entrance to the assembly hall. The King entered. Imagine his surprise at finding the walls completely draped in black.

"Who gave the order for hanging this room thus?" he demanded angrily.

"No one, Sire, to my knowledge," replied the uneasy porter. "The last time I swept out the gallery it was panelled, as it always has been. . . . I am certain this hanging never came out of Your Majesty's depository."

The King, walking at a rapid pace, had already traversed more than two-thirds of the gallery. The Count and porter followed closely; the physician Baumgarten was a little behind, divided between his fears of being left alone and of being exposed to the consequences of what promised to be such a strange adventure.

"Go no further, Sire," exclaimed the porter. "Upon my soul, there is sorcery behind this. At such an hour . . . and since the death of the Queen, your gracious wife . . . they say she walks in this gallery. . . . May God protect us!"

"Stop, Sire," entreated the Count in turn. "Do you not hear the noise that comes from the assembly hall? Who knows to what dangers Your Majesty may be exposed?"

"Sire," broke in Baumgarten, whose candle had just been blown out by a gust of wind, "at least allow me to go and fetch a score of your halberdiers."

"Let us go in," said the King sternly, stop-

ping before the door of the great apartment. "Porter, open the door immediately."

He kicked it with his feet, and the noise, echoing from the roof, resounded along the gallery like the report of a cannon.

The porter trembled so much that he could not find the keyhole.

"An old soldier trembling!" said Charles, shrugging his shoulders. "Come, Count, you open the door."

"Sire," replied the Count, recoiling a step, "if Your Majesty commanded me to walk up to the mouth of a German or a Danish cannon I would obey unhesitatingly, but you wish me to defy the powers of hell."

The King snatched the key from the hands of the porter.

"I quite see," he observed contemptuously, "that I must attend this matter myself," and before his suite could stay him he had opened the heavy oaken door and entered the great hall, pronouncing the words "By the power of God!" His three acolytes, urged by a curiosity stronger than their fear—and perhaps ashamed to desert their King—went in after him. The great hall was lighted up by innumerable torches, and the old figured tapestry had been replaced by black hangings. Along the walls hung, as

usual, the German, Danish, and Russian flags—trophies taken by the soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus. In their midst were the Swedish banners, covered with crape as for a funeral.

An immense assembly filled the seats. The four orders of the State (the nobility, clergy, citizens and peasants) were arranged in their proper order. All were clothed in black, and this array of human faces, lit up against a dark background, so dazzled the eyes of the four witnesses of this extraordinary scene that not one figure was recognisable in the crowd. Thus an actor who stands before a large audience is not able to distinguish a single individual; he sees but a confused mass of faces.

Seated on the raised throne from which the King usually addressed his Parliament, they saw a bleeding corpse clothed in the royal insignia. At his right stood a child with a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand; at his left an old man, or rather another spectre, leant against the throne. He wore the State cloak as used by the former adminstrators of Sweden before Vasa had made it a kingdom. In front of the throne, seated before a table covered with large books and rolls of documents, were several grave and austere-looking personages, clothed in long black robes, who looked like judges. Between

the throne and the seats of the assembly a block was raised covered with black crape; against it lay an axe.

No one in that supernatural assembly seemed to notice the presence of Charles and the three people with him. At their entry they could only hear at first a confused murmur of inarticulate words; then the oldest of the black-robed judges arose—the one who seemed to be the president—and struck the book which lay open in front of him three times with his hand. Deep silence immediately followed. Then there came into the hall by a door opposite to that by which Charles had entered several young men of noble bearing and richly clad. Their hands were tied behind their backs, but they walked with heads erect and confident looks. Behind them a stalwart man in a jerkin of brown leather held the ends of the cords which bound their hands. The most important of the prisoners—he who walked first—stopped in the middle of the hall before the block and looked at it with supreme disdain. While this was going on the corpse seemed to shake convulsively, and a fresh stream of crimson blood flowed out of its wound. The youth kneeled down and laid his head on the block, the axe flashed in the air and the sound of its descent followed immediately. A stream of blood

gushed over the dais and mingled with that from the corpse; the head bounded several times on the crimsoned pavement, and then rolled at the feet of Charles. It dyed him with its blood.

Up to this moment surprise had held the King dumb, but this frightful spectacle unloosed his tongue. He stepped forward toward the dais, and, addressing himself to the figure who was clothed in the administrator's robes, he pronounced boldly the well-known form of words—

"If thou art of God, speak; if thou art from the Other, leave us in peace."

The phantom spoke to him slowly in solemn tones—

"KING CHARLES! this blood will not be shed during your reign . . ." (here the voice grew less distinct) "but five reigns later. Woe, woe, woe to the House of Vasa!"

Then the spectres of the countless personages who formed this extraordinary assembly gradually became fainter, until they soon looked like coloured shadows, and then they completely disappeared. All the fantastic lights were extinguished, and those of Charles and his suite revealed only the old tapestries, slightly waving in the draught. They heard for some time after-

ward a melodious sound, which one of the witnesses described as like the sighing of wind amongst leaves, and another to the rasping sound given by the strings of a harp that is being tuned. All agreed as to the duration of the apparition, which they judged to have lasted about ten minutes.

The black draperies, the dissevered head, the drops of blood which had stained the dais—all had vanished with the phantoms; only upon Charles's slipper was there a bloodstain. This was the sole witness left by which to recall the scene of that night, had it not been sufficiently engraved upon his memory.

When the King returned to his chamber he had an account written of what he had seen, signed it himself, and caused it to be signed by his fellow-witnesses. In spite of the precautions taken to keep the contents of this document secret it was soon known, even during the lifetime of Charles XI. It still exists, and up to the present time no one has thought fit to throw doubts upon its authenticity. In it the King concludes with these remarkable words:—

"And if that which I herein relate is not the simple truth, I renounce all my hope in the life to come, the which I may have merited for some good deeds done, and, above all, for my zeal in

working for the welfare of my people, and in preserving the faith of my forefathers."

Now, when the reader recollects the death of Gustavus III, and the doom of Ankarstroem, his assassin, they will find more than a mere coincidence between that event and the circumstances of this extraordinary prophecy.

The young man beheaded before the States Assembly should be called Ankarstroem.

The crowned corpse should be Gustavus III.

The child, his son and successor, Gustavus Adolphus IV.

Finally, the old man was the Duke of Sudermania, uncle of Gustavus IV, regent of the Crown, and, in the end, King, after the deposition of his nephew.

THE TAKING OF THE REDOUBT

L'Enlèvement de la Redoute

THE TAKING OF THE REDOUBT

A MILITARY friend of mine, who died of fever in Greece some years ago, related to me one day the story of the first engagement in which he had taken part. His narrative was so striking that I wrote it down from memory as soon as I had an opportunity. It is as follows:—

On the evening of the 4th September I rejoined my regiment. I found the colonel in bivouac. At first he received me rather coolly, but, after having read General B——'s letter of recommendation, his manner changed, and he said a few kind words.

He introduced me to my captain, who had just returned from a reconnoitring expedition. This captain, whose acquaintance I had scarcely the time to make, was a tall, dark man, with a severe and forbidding expression. He had been a common soldier, and had won his commission and the cross on the battlefield. His voice was weak and hoarse, and contrasted strangely with his almost gigantic height. I was told that this

strange voice was due to a ball which had pierced him through at the Battle of Jéna.

On hearing that I came from the school at Fontainebleau he shrugged his shoulders and said, "My lieutenant died yesterday." I understood that he meant to imply, "You are intended to take his place, and you are not up to it." A cutting reply rose to my lips, but I restrained myself.

Behind Fort Cheverino, which stood about two gunshots off our bivouac, rose the moon. It was large and red as it usually is when rising. But this evening it seemed to me to have an unusual splendour. For an instant the fort stood outlined in black against the shining orb, which looked like the cone of a volcano during eruption. An old soldier, near whom I was standing, remarked on the moon's colour.

"How very red it is!" he said; "it is a sign that it will cost much to take this precious fort."

I was always superstitious, and this omen, above all at such a moment, impressed me greatly. I laid myself down, but could not sleep. I got up and walked about for some time, watching the long lines of fire scattered over the heights beyond the village of Cheverino.

When I thought the fresh, sharp night air had sufficiently quickened my blood, I returned

to the fire. I wrapped myself carefully in my cloak and closed my eyes, thinking not to open them before the morning. But sleep obstinately evaded me. Gradually my thoughts took a melancholy hue. I told myself I had not one friend amongst the hundred thousand men who covered that plain. If I were wounded I should go to the hospital, there to be treated without consideration by ignorant surgeons. All I had heard of surgical operations returned to my memory. My heart beat fast, and instinctively I arranged my handkerchief and pocket-book over my breast as a kind of cuirass. I was overcome with weariness, and I became more drowsy each moment, but at each moment some dark thought sprang up with greater force and woke me into a start.

Nevertheless weariness overcame me, and, when the reveille sounded, I was fast asleep. We fell into our ranks; the roll was called; then we piled arms again, and everything suggested that we were going to pass a quiet day.

About three o'clock an aide-de-camp arrived, bearing a despatch, and we were ordered to shoulder arms. Our skirmishers scattered themselves over the plain; we followed them slowly, and in about twenty minutes' time we saw all the outposts of the Russians fall back and re-enter the fort.

One battery of artillery was on our right, another on our left, but both were well in advance of us. They opened a sharp fire on the enemy, who answered briskly; and very soon the fort of Cheverino was hidden under thick clouds of smoke.

Our regiment was almost protected from the Russian fire by a ridge of earth. Since they aimed rather at our artillery than at us, their balls passed over our heads, or at the most cast earth and small stone at us.

The moment the order to advance was given us my captain looked at me so closely that I felt impelled to stroke my budding moustache two or three times with as nonchalant an air as possible. In fact, I had no fear; my only dread was that people might think me afraid. Furthermore, these inoffensive shots contributed to keep me in a calm state of mind. My vanity told me that I was really in danger, being at last under battery fire. I was delighted to find myself so cool, and I dreamed of the pleasure of relating in the drawing-room of Madame B——, Rue de Provence, the story of the taking of the fort of Cheverino.

The colonel rode past our company and said to me, " Well, you are going to get it hot at your first battle."

I smiled with a truly military air, at the same time brushing from my sleeve some dust which a ball thirty paces off had thrown up.

It was evident that the Russians had noticed the miscarriage of their balls, for they replaced them by shells which could more easily reach us in the hollow where we were posted. One that burst near by knocked off my cap and killed a man close to me.

"I congratulate you," said the captain to me, as I picked up my cap. "Now you are safe for the day."

I was acquainted with the soldier's superstition that the axiom *non bis in idem* holds good as much on the battlefield as in the court of justice. I replaced my cap jauntily.

"That's a free and easy kind of greeting," I replied as jovially as possible. This poor joke seemed excellent under the circumstances.

"You are lucky," said the captain; "you need not fear anything more, and you will command a company to-night. I know very well that a bullet for me will find its billet to-day. Each time I have been wounded the officer next to me has been grazed by a spent bullet, and," he added in a lower and half-ashamed tone, "their names always began with a P."

I took courage; most people would have done

the same; most people would have been equally struck with such prophetic words. Conscript as I was, I did not think I could confide my feelings to anybody. I thought I ought always to appear cool and brave.

About half an hour after, the fire of the Russians slackened considerably: then we sallied out of our cover to storm the fort.

Our regiment was composed of three battalions. The second was ordered to outflank the fort from the side of the gorge; the other two were to make the assault. I was in the third battalion.

Coming out from behind the buttress which had protected us, we were greeted by several rounds of fire, which did but little harm in our ranks. The whistling of the balls startled me: I kept looking round, thus bringing upon myself joking remarks from my more seasoned comrades.

"Upon the whole," I said, "a battle is not so very dreadful."

We advanced at the double, preceded by our sharpshooters; suddenly the Russians gave three cheers, three distinct hurrahs, then they stopped firing and became silent.

"I do not like that silence," said my captain; "it bodes no good to us."

I thought our men were a little too noisy, and I could not help inwardly contrasting their tumultuous clamour with the impressive silence of the enemy.

We quickly reached the outskirts of the fort, where the palisades had been broken and the earth thrown up by our balls. The soldiers leapt upon this newly broken ground with shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" more loudly than one could have thought possible from men who had already shouted so much.

I raised my eyes, and never shall I forget the spectacle before me. Most of the smoke had risen, and was hanging like a canopy about twenty feet above the fort. Through the blue haze I could see the Russian Grenadiers, with arms fixed, like motionless statues, behind their half-destroyed parapet. I can see now each soldier, his left eye fixed on us, his right hidden by his raised gun. In an embrasure a few feet from us a man was holding a lighted fuse to a cannon.

I shuddered, and I thought my last hour had come.

"Now the fun begins," cried my captain. "Here goes!"

These were the last words I heard him speak.

A roll of drums sounded in the fort. I saw

all the muskets levelled. I closed my eyes, and heard an appalling uproar, followed by shrieks and groans. I opened my eyes, surprised to find myself still alive. The fort was again wrapped in smoke. I was surrounded with wounded and dying. My captain lay stretched at my feet: his head had been smashed by a ball, and I was covered with his brains and blood. Out of all my company there were only six men and myself left standing.

A moment of stupor followed this carnage. The colonel, putting his hat on the end of his sword, was the first to climb the parapet, shouting "Vive l'Empereur!" He was soon followed by all the survivors. I can not remember clearly what followed. I do not know how we entered the fort. We fought hand to hand in such a dense smoke that we could not see. I suppose I hit, for I found my sabre covered with blood. At last I heard the shout "Victory!" and, the smoke clearing away, I saw the ground of the fort covered with blood and corpses. The guns especially were buried under heaps of dead. Scattered about in disorder stood about two hundred men in French uniform: some were loading their pieces, others wiping their bayonets. Eleven Russian prisoners were with them.

The colonel was lying covered with blood on a broken ammunition box near the gorge. Several soldiers crowded round him. I joined them.

"Where is the senior captain?" he asked one of the sergeants.

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders in a significant way.

"And the senior lieutenant?"

"Here is the gentleman who came yesterday," said the sergeant in a perfectly calm voice.

The colonel smiled bitterly.

"Well, monsieur, you are commander-in-chief," said he to me. "Have the gorge of the fort fortified at once with these waggons. The enemy is in force, but General C—— is coming to support you."

"Colonel," I said to him, "you are badly wounded."

"A fig for that, my lad. We have taken the redoubt!"

TAMANGO

TAMANGO

CAPTAIN LEDOUX was a born sailor. He had started at the bottom and worked his way up to the rank of assistant quarter-master. At the battle of Trafalgar his left hand was so severely damaged by splinters of wood that he had to have it amputated, and, consequently, he received his discharge, together with first-rate testimonials. The quiet monotony of home life was distasteful to him, and, when he was offered the post of second lieutenant on board a corsair, he eagerly seized the opportunity of going to sea again. The money which came to him as his share of a few captures enabled him to buy books and to study the theory of navigation as a supplement to the practical knowledge he already possessed. In due time he became captain of a pirate lugger which could boast of three guns and a crew of sixty dauntless sailors: the longshoremen of Jersey still remember the exploits of this pirate lugger. Then came the peace, which was a great grief to him; he had amassed a consider-

able amount of money during the war and had looked forward to increase his little fortune at the expense of the English. But he was obliged to offer his services to peaceful merchants; and, as he was known to be a man of courage and experience, he had no difficulty in finding a ship. When slave trading was prohibited by law it could not be undertaken without running great risks, for it was necessary not only to evade the watchfulness of the French Customs officers (which was not so very difficult), but also to escape being captured by English cruisers. Captain Ledoux proved invaluable to these "ebony" * merchants.

Unlike the majority of sailors who spend many years in subordinate positions, Captain Ledoux had not that deep-rooted dread of innovation, nor that innate feeling of routine, which even their elevation to higher rank is seldom able to expunge. On the contrary, he was the first to suggest to his ship-builder the use of metal tanks for holding fresh water. He had the handcuffs, too, and the chains—indispensable articles on board such vessels—made in a particular fashion and carefully varnished to prevent their rusting. But that for which he was well known to all the slave traders was the brig

* Slave dealers used to style themselves *ebony* merchants.

he had had constructed under his personal supervision and according to his own ideas. He had christened her *Hope*. Built for slave trading, she was a fast sailer, narrow and long like a war-ship, and yet able to hold a great number of blacks. He had had the 'tween decks made narrower and less lofty; had reduced the height to forty inches, declaring that that left sufficient room for any nigger of reasonable stature to sit at ease—why should they want to stand up? There would be more than enough standing for them when they reached the colonies, he explained.

The slaves would sit with their backs against the sides of the ship in two parallel lines, leaving a free space between their feet which, in all other slave ships, was only used as a gangway. It was Ledoux's idea to make use of this free space by putting more slaves there, forcing them to sit at right angles to the others. In this way his brig would hold at least ten slaves more than any other ship of the same size. In case of need, more still could have been put on board, but he was considerate enough to insist that each nigger should have a space measuring about five foot by two in which to stretch his limbs during the six weeks' journey. For, after all, niggers were human beings like the white men, he ex-

plained to the shipwright, as an excuse for his generous treatment.

The *Hope* weighed anchor in the port of Nantes on a Friday—a fact which superstitious people subsequently recalled. The Customs officers who visited the brig for the purpose of inspecting everything on board did not come across six large cases full of chains, handcuffs, and those irons which were for some unknown reason called "bonds of justice." The very considerable supply of fresh water which had been stowed on board did not seem to astonish them, in spite of the fact that the *Hope* (according to her bills) was only going to Senegambia for the purpose of trading in wood and ivory. The journey was certainly not a long one, but perhaps they thought there was no harm in erring on the safe side—for the water would be invaluable if they happened to be becalmed.

So the good ship *Hope* set sail on a Friday, thoroughly well provisioned and equipped. Ledoux fancied at first that the masts seemed hardly stout enough; but in the course of time he found that the vessel fulfilled his expectations in every way. They had a first-rate journey, and the coast of Africa was soon sighted. The anchor was lowered at Joal (if I mistake not), that portion of the coast being at the time

unguarded by English cruisers; and the native merchants immediately came on board.

The moment could not have been more favourable. Tamango, a well-known warrior and slave dealer, had just reached the coast with a convoy of slaves, which he was selling at cheap rates with the confidence of a man who feels that he has the power of meeting any demands as soon as the article of his trade becomes scarcer.

Captain Ledoux landed at the mouth of the river and called on Tamango. He found him sitting in a straw hut, which had been hastily erected for him, together with his two wives, a few petty traders, and the slave drivers. Tamango had felt bound to put some clothes on to receive the white captain. The old blue uniform which he wore could still be recognised as having been a corporal's, but there were two gold epaulettes on each shoulder, both fastened to the same button and hanging down, one behind, the other in front. As he did not wear a shirt, and the tunic was too small for a man of his stature, a broad zone of black skin was visible between the white facings of the uniform and the canvas breeches. It looked like a belt. A heavy cavalry sword which hung at his side was fastened by a string, and a fine double-barrelled English rifle completed the outfit in which the

African warrior doubtless considered himself more than a match for the most exquisite dandy from London or Paris.

Captain Ledoux stared at him for some time in silence, and Tamango, flattered by the belief that he was making a great impression on the white man, drew himself up like a grenadier being inspected by a strange general. Ledoux, after having critically examined him, turned to his chief officer and observed, " There's a piece of brawn which would fetch at least a thousand crowns if we could only land him safe and sound in Martinique."

As soon as they had sat down the customary greetings were exchanged, a sailor who had a smattering of the *Yolof* language acting as interpreter. A basket full of bottles of brandy was brought, drinking began at once, and the captain thought to propitiate Tamango by making him a present of a fine copper powder-flask with a portrait of Napoleon embossed on it. The gift was acknowledged with the conventional show of gratitude. Tamango then suggested that they should go and sit outside in the shade (not forgetting the brandy bottle) and inspect the slaves he had to sell.

They came forward in a long file, worn out by fear and fatigue, all bearing on their shoul-

ders a huge fork over two yards long, the two prongs of which were fastened at the back of the neck with a wooden bar. Whenever they set out on a march one of the slave drivers bears on his shoulder the handle of the yoke of the first slave, who carries that of the man behind him; the second slave carries the yoke-handle of the third slave, and so on with the others. When a halt is made, the leader of the file drives the pointed end of his yoke-handle into the ground and the whole column comes to a standstill. Of course, there can be no question of escape from the file with a heavy yoke two yards long fastened round one's neck.

The captain shrugged his shoulders as each slave, male or female, passed before him, he called them puny creatures, said that the females were too old or too young, and complained of the degeneracy of the black race.

"The whole race is deteriorating," he declared. "It used to be quite different in the olden days when every woman was five foot six, and four men could easily have worked a frigate's capstan and raised the sheet anchor."

However, he critically picked out a first assortment of blacks, choosing the strong and the good-looking, for which he was willing to pay the usual price; on the remainder he demanded a

considerable reduction. But Tamango knew his own mind; he insisted that his wares were valuable, and spoke of the scarcity of men and the dangers of the traffic. He ended by quoting the very lowest price he could possibly accept for the slaves the white captain still had room for on board.

Ledoux stared at him in amazement and indignation when he heard Tamango's proposal interpreted. The captain got up, swearing like a trooper, apparently with the intention of putting an end there and then to all bargaining with a man so unreasonable. But Tamango, after some difficulty, persuaded him to sit down. Another bottle was opened and the discussion renewed. Now it was the black man's turn to call the white captain's views outrageous and extravagant. They talked and haggled as bottle after bottle was emptied; but the liquor was having quite a different effect on the two contracting parties. The more the Frenchman drank the less became his offers, and the more the nigger drank the less he insisted on his demands. So, when the case of brandy was finished, it was found that they had come to terms. In exchange for the hundred and sixty slaves, Tamango accepted a quantity of worthless cotton, powder, gun-flints, three casks of

brandy, and fifty rusty rifles. The captain, to ratify the compact, shook the half-tipsy nigger by the hand, and immediately the slaves were handed over to the French sailors, who lost no time in putting on iron chains and handcuffs in place of the wooden yokes—a striking demonstration of the superiority of European civilisation.

There were still about thirty slaves—children, old men, or infirm women. But there was no more room on board. Tamango, not knowing what to do with this refuse, offered to sell them to the captain at the rate of a bottle of brandy a head. The offer was a tempting one. Ledoux remembered a performance of the *Sicilian Vespers,* at Nantes, at which he had noticed that a considerable number of sturdy and well-furnished people had managed to push their way into the pit which was already full, and ultimately find seats, thanks to the compressibility of human bodies. He agreed to take the twenty slimmest of the thirty slaves. Tamango then offered to dispose of the ten remaining for a glass of brandy a head. The fact that children go half-price and take up half-room in railway carriages crossed the captain's mind. So he accepted three children, but said he would not take one more. Tamango, seeing himself left

still with seven slaves on his hands, seized his rifle and took aim at the nearest woman. She was the mother of the three children.

"Buy her," he said to the white man, "or I'll fire. Half a glass of brandy, or she dies."

"But what the deuce am I to do with her?" asked Ledoux.

Tamango fired, and the slave fell down dead.

"Now for another!" cried Tamango, taking aim at a decrepit old man. "A glass of brandy, or——"

The bullet went off at random, for one of his wives had suddenly seized his arm. She had happened to recognise in the old man whom her husband was about to kill a *guiriot,* or magician, who had prophesied that she would be queen.

Tamango, excited by all the brandy he had consumed, lost control of himself when he found himself thus thwarted. He struck his wife roughly with the butt end of his gun, and turned toward the captain.

"Take her," he said; "I'll make you a present of this woman."

"I shall be able to find room for you," said Ledoux, as he took her by the hand, and he smiled when he saw how beautiful she was.

The interpreter—a charitable man—asked

Tamango for the remaining six slaves in exchange for a cardboard snuff-box. He took off their yokes and told them to go whither they would. They hurried away in different directions, at a loss to know how to reach their homes, two hundred leagues from the coast.

In the meantime the captain had said goodbye to Tamango and was hard at work getting his cargo on board. He did not think it safe to remain longer in the river, for fear of the cruisers which might return at any moment. So he made up his mind to set sail on the morrow. Tamango could not do anything but lie down on the grass in the shade, and sleep away the effects of the brandy.

When he woke up the vessel was already under sail, and moving down the river. Tamango, still very dizzy from the effects of his recent debauch, called for his wife Ayché. He was reminded that she had been unfortunate enough to displease him, and that he had made a present of her to the white captain who had taken her away on board with him. Half stupefied at this news, Tamango clasped his head in his hands; then, seizing his gun, he rushed away by the most direct route toward a little creek about half a mile from the sea. He knew the river made several detours before it reached the sea,

and, by means of a small boat which ought to be there, he hoped to overtake the brig, delayed in her voyage, as she would be, by the winding river. He was not deceived; he leaped into the boat and just managed to reach the slave ship in time.

Ledoux was surprised to see him; still more so to learn that he wanted his wife back.

"You gave her to me," he said, "and I have no intention of giving you back your present," and he turned and left him.

But the black insisted, said he would give back some of the goods he had received in exchange for the slaves. The captain laughed, and told him that Ayché was a fine woman and that he intended to keep her. Poor Tamango burst into a torrent of tears, and groaned and cried like a man being tortured by a surgeon. He flung himself about the deck calling for his darling Ayché, and dashed his head against the planks as though he were trying to commit suicide. The captain, quite unmoved, pointed to the shore, and suggested that it was time for him to go. But Tamango held to his point. He went to the length of offering his golden epaulettes, his sword, his rifle. All in vain.

Meantime the lieutenant of the *Hope* suggested to the captain, "Why not take this

lusty brute in place of the three slaves who died during the night; he is worth more than they."

Ledoux looked at him. Yes. He was worth at least a thousand crowns. Besides, this journey, which promised to be exceptionally remunerative, would probably be his last; his fortune would be made, and he would give up the slave trade. If so, what did it matter what sort of a reputation he left behind on the coast of Guinea? There was not a soul in sight on the shore, and the black chieftain was entirely at his mercy. It would only be a matter of disarming him, for it would hardly be safe to lay hands on him while he still had arms in his possession. So Ledoux asked him for his gun, as if he wished to examine it to see whether it was really worth exchanging for the beautiful negress. Whilst he was scrutinising it, he took care to jerk the charge out. The lieutenant succeeded in obtaining his sword, and Tamango stood disarmed. Two sturdy sailors sprang on him, brought him to the ground, and tried to bind him. But the black man struggled heroically as soon as he recovered from the surprise, and he fought for long with the two sailors in spite of the disadvantage at which they had him. By sheer strength he sprang to his feet, and

with one blow he felled the man who held him by the neck. Leaving half his coat in the hands of the other sailor, he dashed furiously toward the lieutenant to regain his sword, and received a cut on the head which, without going deep, made a large wound. He fell a second time, and the sailors soon bound him hand and foot. He yelled with rage and struggled and writhed like a wild boar caught in a net; after a while, seeing that all resistance was useless, he shut his eyes and remained absolutely motionless. Had it not been for his heavy and hurried breathing, one might have thought him dead.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the captain, "won't these slaves he sold to us chuckle heartily when they see him a slave like them! They will begin to think there must be such a thing as Providence."

Meanwhile poor Tamango was bleeding fast. The charitable interpreter, who, the day before, had saved the lives of the six slaves, came to bind up his wound and speak a few words of sympathy with him. No record exists of what he said, and Tamango remained as motionless as a corpse. Two sailors carried him like a package down to his allotted place in the 'tween decks. For two days he refused to touch anything to eat or drink, and he scarcely opened his

eyes. His companions in captivity, once his prisoners, had watched him brought into their midst with terror-stricken amazement. So great was the awe with which his mere presence still inspired them that not one of them durst jeer at the misery of the man who was the cause of all their suffering.

Sailing rapidly on the wings of a strong land breeze, the vessel was soon out of sight of the coast of Africa. The captain's mind, no longer haunted with visions of English cruisers, began to dwell on the prospective fortune he hoped to reap in the colonies toward which he was sailing. His cargo of "ebony" was in good health. There were no contagious diseases. Only twelve negroes had died of suffocation, and they were the weakest—a mere trifle. But in order to preserve his human cargo as much as possible from the effects of the passage he had them brought up on deck once a day. Three successive batches of these unhappy slaves came up to inhale, for one hour each batch, the stock of fresh air which was to last through the twenty-four hours. A portion of the crew mounted guard, armed to the teeth for fear of insurrection; but they took care that the slaves were never entirely freed from their shackles. Sometimes a sailor who could play the violin would treat them to some

music, and it was curious to watch all those black faces gazing up at the fiddler, gradually losing their look of abject despair, and then breaking forth into loud laughter—clapping their hands too, as much as their chains would allow them. Exercise being essential to health, one of Captain Ledoux's salutary regulations was that all the slaves should be made to dance, just as horses are made to prance when embarked on a long journey.

"Come along, my boys, dance and amuse yourselves!" the captain would shout in a voice of thunder, cracking his heavy slave-whip. In less than no time the poor blacks were leaping and dancing.

For some time Tamango's wound kept him below the hatches. But at length he appeared on deck; at first he stood in the midst of the crowd of cringing slaves, holding his proud head very high, and his sad but untroubled eyes gazed over the wide expanse of ocean which surrounded the ship; then he lay down, or rather threw himself down on deck, without even troubling to shift his chains into a less awkward position. Ledoux was sitting behind him on the quarter-deck, smoking his pipe at ease. Near him stood Ayché, holding in her hand a tray of liquors which she was ready to pour out for him. In-

stead of shackles she wore a pretty blue cotton dress and dainty morocco shoes, which clearly showed that she occupied a position of honour in the captain's domestic circle. One of the black men who loathed Tamango pointed her out to him. As soon as he caught sight of her he cried out, and, springing up impetuously, reached the quarter-deck before the sailors on guard could prevent such a flagrant breach of naval discipline.

"Ayché!" he shouted at the top of his voice —and Ayché shrieked as he added, "do you imagine that there is no MAMA JUMBO in the land of the white man?"

The sailors rushed to his side with uplifted clubs, but he calmly folded his arms and walked slowly back to his place, whilst Ayché burst into a flood of tears, and seemed appalled at his mysterious question.

The interpreter explained what the awful Mama Jumbo was, the very mention of which had roused such terror.

"It is the bogey of the black men," he said. "When a husband is afraid his wife is going to behave as some wives do, as well in France as Africa, he threatens her with Mama Jumbo. I have seen Mama Jumbo with my own eyes, and I understand the trick; but the poor blacks

. . . they are so unsophisticated they do not understand anything. Picture to yourself a group of women dancing in an evening—having a *folgar,* as they call it in their dialect—near a thick and sombre grove. Suddenly weird music is heard. Not a soul is to be seen, for all the musicians are hidden amongst the trees. The sounds of the reed flutes, wooden drums, *balafos,* and guitars made of the half of a gourd make a melody calculated to produce the devil himself. No sooner do the women hear the music than they begin to tremble and would run away if their husbands would let them; they know too well what is going to happen. Suddenly a huge white figure as tall as our top-gallant-mast comes stalking out of the wood, with a head as big as a pumpkin, eyes like hawse-holes, and a mouth like the devil's, full of fire. It moves slowly, very slowly, and does not come more than half a cable's length away from the grove. The women shriek and yell like costermongers. It is 'Mama Jumbo.' And then their husbands tell them to confess their sins, for if they do not speak the Mama Jumbo is there to gobble them up alive. Some of the women are foolish enough to acknowledge everything, and their husbands proceed to give them a sound thrashing."

"But what is the white figure, this Mama Jumbo?" asked the captain.

"Why, it's only some Merry Andrew, muffled up in a white sheet, holding up on the end of a stick a hollow gourd, with a lighted candle inside, that serves as a head. It is nothing worse than that, for it does not require much ingenuity to deceive these poor blacks. But, when all's said and done, it's not such a bad invention, this Mama Jumbo of theirs; I wish my wife believed in it."

"If my wife knows nothing of Mistress Jumbo," said Ledoux, "she has met with Master Stick, and she knows well enough what the result would be if she played any pranks with me. We are not a long-suffering family, we Ledoux, and though I have only one fist left it can still use a rope's-end to some purpose. As to that joker who started the subject of Mama Jumbo, tell him to keep still, and that if he frightens this little woman again I'll have him flogged till his skin changes from black to the colour of an underdone beefsteak.

The captain led Ayché down to his room and tried to comfort her, but neither his caresses nor his blows (there was a limit even to the captain's patience) succeeded in pacifying the beautiful negress; her tears flowed in torrents. Ledoux

went up on deck in a bad humour and vented his feelings on the officer on duty concerning the first thing that came uppermost.

During the night, when nearly everyone on board was sound asleep and the men on watch were listening to a low, sad, monotonous chant, which seemed to come from the 'tween decks, they heard the shrill, piercing shriek of a woman. Then they heard Ledoux's fierce voice swearing and threatening, and the sound of his heavy whip echoed through the whole vessel. Then the noise ceased, and all was silent. On the morrow Tamango came on deck, his face disfigured, but still as proud and undaunted as ever.

As soon as Ayché caught sight of him she rushed from the quarter-deck, where she had been sitting by the side of the captain, and fell on her knees before Tamango, exclaiming in a frenzy of despair—

"Forgive me, Tamango, forgive me!"

Tamango looked steadily into her eyes for a minute, and then, seeing that the interpreter was not within earshot, he ejaculated "A file!" and, turning his back upon her, lay down on the deck. The captain chid her savagely, even struck her once or twice, and enjoined her never again to speak to her ex-husband. But he had not the least inkling of the meaning of the few

words they had exchanged, and he did not ask any questions about them.

Tamango meanwhile, locked up with the other slaves, continually exhorted them to make one great effort to regain their liberty. He spoke to them of the small number of the white men, and called their attention to the increasing carelessness of their guards; and, without going into details, he promised them that he would find some way of leading them back to their country. He boasted of his knowledge of the occult sciences, for which the black races have great veneration, and declared that any who refused to assist in the attempt would incur the wrath of the devil. All these harangues were delivered in the dialect of the Peules, which was known to most of the slaves, but which the interpreter did not understand. Such was the credit of the dreaded orator, and so inveterate was their habit of obeying him, that his eloquence worked wonders, and he was begged to fix a day for their emancipation long before he had even had time to work out all his plans. So he told the conspirators vaguely that the time was not yet come, and that the devil, who appeared to him at night, had not yet given the word; but he bade them hold themselves in readiness for the first signal. In the meantime he did not lose

any opportunity of testing the vigilance of the crew. One day he saw a sailor leaning over the side of the vessel watching a shoal of flying-fish which were following the ship. Tamango took the rifle which had been left standing against the gunwale, and began to handle it, mimicking grotesquely the exercises he had seen the sailors do. The rifle was immediately taken from him, but he had learnt that it was possible to touch a weapon without at once arousing suspicion. When the time came for him to use one in earnest, woe betide the man who tried then to wrest it from him!

One morning Ayché threw him a biscuit, making at the same time a sign which he alone understood. The biscuit contained a small file, and on that tool hung the success of the plot. Tamango took good care not to let his companions see the file; but, when night had fallen, he began to utter unintelligible sounds, accompanied by weird gestures. Gradually he became more and more excited, and the mutterings increased to loud groans. As they listened to the varied intonations of his voice, the slaves felt convinced that he was engaged in an animated conversation with an unseen person. They were all terrified, not doubting that the devil was at that moment in their midst. Tamango put the

finishing touch to the scene by exclaiming joyfully—

"Comrades! the spirit which I have conjured has at length fulfilled his promises, and I hold in my hand the talisman which is to save us. Now you only need to summon up a little courage, and you are free men."

Those near him were allowed to feel the file, and not one of them was sharp enough to suspect that the whole thing was a gross imposture.

At length, after many days of expectation, the great day of liberty and vengeance dawned. The conspirators had been sworn to secrecy by a solemn oath, and the arrangements had been settled after much deliberation. The strongest amongst those who happened to go on deck at the same time as Tamango were to seize the arms of their guards, some of the others were to go to the captain's room to fetch the arms which were kept there. Those who had succeeded in filing through their handcuffs were to lead the way; but in spite of several nights' persistent toil, the majority of the slaves were still unable to take any active part in the attack. So three lusty negroes were singled out to slay the man who kept in his pocket the keys of the manacles, and to return at once and unfetter their companions.

That day Captain Ledoux seemed in the best of tempers. Contrary to his usual habits, he pardoned a cabin boy who had incurred a flogging. He congratulated the officer of the watch on his seamanship, told the crew he was pleased with their work and promised to give them all a gratuity at Martinique, which they would reach very soon. All the sailors at once began to amuse themselves by making plans as to how they would use the gratuity. Their thoughts were of brandy and of the swart women of Martinique, when Tamango and his fellow-conspirators were brought up on deck.

They had been careful to file their handcuffs in such a way that nothing was noticeable, but at the same time so that they could break them open easily. Furthermore, they rattled their chains so much that morning, that they seemed to be twice as heavily laden as usual. When they had had time to drink in the air, they all joined hands and began to dance, whilst Tamango intoned his tribal war song * which he always used before going to battle. After they had danced for some time, Tamango, as if tired out, stretched himself at full length near a sailor who was leaning back at his ease against the ship's bulwarks; all the others followed his

* Each negro chief has his own.

example, so that every one of the guards was singled out by the several negroes.

As soon as he had managed to remove his handcuffs quietly, Tamango gave a tremendous shout, which was the signal, seized the sailor near him violently by the legs, threw him head over heels, and, planting his foot on his stomach, wrenched the gun away from him and shot the officer of the watch. Simultaneously every other sailor on deck was seized, disarmed, and forthwith strangled. From all sides came sounds of the struggle. The boatswain's mate, who had the keys of the handcuffs, was one of the first victims. In a moment the deck was swarming with a crowd of niggers. Those who could not find arms seized the bars of the capstan or the oars of the gig. The fate of the white men was already sealed; a few sailors made a show of resistance on the quarter-deck, but they lacked weapons and resolution. Ledoux, however, was still alive, and had not lost any of his courage.

Seeing that Tamango was the soul of the revolt, he hoped that if he could kill him short work might be made of his accomplices. So he sprang forward, sword in hand, calling to him at the top of his voice. Tamango lost no time in rushing to the encounter. The two com-

manders met in one of the gangways—one of those narrow passages leading aft from the quarter-deck. Tamango, holding his gun by the barrel, and using it as a club, was the first to strike. The white man dexterously avoided the blow: the butt end of the musket, falling violently on the planks, was smashed, and the weapon was dashed out of Tamango's hand. He stood defenceless, and Ledoux advanced with a diabolical grin. But before he had time to make use of his sword, Tamango, as agile as the panthers of his native country, sprang into his adversary's arms and seized the hand which held the sword. The one strained to hold the sword, the other to wrench it from him. During this desperate struggle both stumbled, but the black man fell undermost. Without a moment's hesitation Tamango hugged his adversary with all his strength, and bit his neck with such vehemence that the blood spurted out as it does under the teeth of a lion. The sword slipped from the weakened hand of the captain. Tamango seized it, sprang up, and, his mouth streaming with blood, yelled his triumph as he stabbed his dying enemy through and through.

The victory was complete. The few remaining sailors entreated the negroes to have pity on them, but all, even the interpreter who had never

done them any harm, were mercilessly massacred. The lieutenant fell fighting heroically. He had withdrawn aft, behind one of those small cannons which turn on a pivot, and are loaded with grape-shot. With his left hand he worked the gun and with his right he used the sword so dexterously that he attracted a crowd of negroes round him. Then he fired the gun into their midst and paved a way with dead and dying. The next moment he was torn to pieces.

When the body of the last white man had been hacked to pieces and thrown overboard the negroes began to feel that their thirst for vengeance was satiated, and they gazed up at the ship's sails which were swollen by the fresh breeze, and seemed still to obey their oppressors and to carry the conquerors in spite of their triumph to the land of slavery.

"All our labour is lost!" they murmured in their despair. "Will the great fetish of the white men lead us back to our homes now that we have shed the blood of so many of his worshippers?"

Someone suggested that Tamango might be able to make the fetish obey. So they all began to shout for Tamango.

He was in no hurry to hear them. They found him standing in the fore cabin, one hand

resting on the captain's bloody sword, the other stretched out to his wife Ayché, who was on her knees kissing it. But the joy of victory could not obliterate a strange look of anxiety which was visible in every line of his face. Less fatuous than the rest, he was better able to understand the difficulties of the situation.

At last he came up on deck, affecting a serenity which he did not feel. Urged by a hundred confused voices to change the course of the vessel, he stalked slowly toward the helm as if to postpone for a while the moment which would determine both for himself and for the others the extent of his power.

Not even the dullest negro on board had failed to notice the influence exercised on the movements of the ship by a certain wheel and the box fixed in front of it; but the whole mechanism was a profound mystery to them. Tamango examined the compass for some time, moving his lips as if he were reading the characters which were printed on it; then he put his hand to his head and assumed the pensive look of a man doing mental arithmetic. All the negroes stood round him, their mouths wide open, their eyes one stare, anxiously taking note of his slightest movement. At length, with that mixture of fear and confidence which ignorance

inspires, he gave the guiding wheel a tremendous turn.

Like a noble steed which rears when some imprudent rider drives in his spurs, the good ship *Hope* plunged into the waves at this unwonted handling, as if she felt insulted and wished to sink together with her stupid pilot. The sails being now entirely at cross purposes with the helm, the ship heeled over so suddenly that it looked as if she were bound to founder. Her long yards soused into the sea; many of the niggers stumbled and some fell overboard. However, the ship righted herself and stood proudly against the swell, as if to make one last effort to avoid destruction. But there came a sudden gust of wind, and, with a deafening crash, the two masts fell, snapped a few feet above the deck, which was strewn with wreckage and covered with a tangled network of ropes. The terrified negroes fled below the hatchway howling with fear, but as there was nothing left to catch the breeze, the vessel remained steady and merely rocked to and fro on the billows.

Presently the more daring amongst them came up again and began clearing away the wreckage which encumbered the deck. Tamango remained motionless, leaning on the binnacle,

his face buried in his folded arms. Ayché, who was beside him, did not dare to speak. One by one the negroes approached him; they began to murmur, and soon a torrent of insults and abuse was let loose upon him.

"Traitor! impostor!" they cried, "you are the cause of all our ills: you sold us to the white men, you persuaded us to rebel, you boasted your wisdom, you promised to take us back to our homes. We trusted you, fools that we were! and now we have narrowly escaped destruction because you have offended the white man's fetish."

Tamango raised his head proudly, and the negroes who stood round him slunk back. He picked up two guns, beckoned to his wife to follow him, and strode through the group of men, who made way for him. He went to the bow of the vessel, where he constructed a kind of barricade of planks and barrels; behind this intrenchment he fixed the two muskets in such a way that the bayonets were menacingly prominent. There he sat down and they left him alone.

Some of the negroes were in tears; others raised their hands to the sky, and called on their own and the white man's fetishes; others knelt down by the compass and wondered at its cease-

less movements, entreating it to take them to their homes again; the remainder lay on the deck in a state of abject despair. Amongst these wretches were women and children shrieking from sheer terror, and a score of wounded men imploring the relief which no one dreamt of bringing them.

All of a sudden a negro appeared on deck, his face beaming with joy. He came to tell them that he had discovered where the white men stored their brandy; and his excitement and general demeanour clearly showed that he had already helped himself to some. This piece of news silenced for a while the cries of the distracted slaves. They rushed down to the steward's room and gorged the liquor. In about an hour's time they were all dancing and roaring on deck, giving vent to the excesses of brutish drunkenness. The noise of their singing and dancing mingled with the groans and sobs of the wounded. Night fell, and still the orgy continued.

Next morning, when they woke, despair again possessed them. During the night a great number of the wounded had died. The vessel was surrounded by floating corpses, and clouds were lowering over the heavy sea. They held a conference. Several experts in the art of magic,

who had not dared speak of their knowledge before for fear of Tamango, now offered their services, and several potent incantations were tried. The failure of each attempt increased their despondency till at length they appealed to Tamango, who was still behind his barricade. After all, he was the wisest of them, and he alone could extricate them from the desperate condition into which he had brought them. An old man approached him with overtures of peace, and begged him to give them his advice. But Tamango, as inexorable as Coriolanus, turned a deaf ear to his entreaties. During the night, in the midst of the tumult, he had fetched a supply of biscuits and salt meat. To all appearance he had no intention of leaving the solitude of his retreat.

There was still plenty of brandy left. That, at all events, helped them to forget the sea, slavery and the approach of death. They went to sleep, and in their dreams saw Africa with its forests of gum trees, its thatched huts, and its baobabs, whose foliage shaded whole villages. The orgy of the day before was renewed, and continued for some time. They did nothing but howl and weep and tear their hair, or drink and sleep. Several died of drinking, others jumped into the sea or stabbed themselves.

One morning Tamango left his fort and advanced to the stump of the mainmast.

"Slaves!" he shouted, "the Spirit has appeared to me in a dream and revealed to me the means of helping you to return to your homes. You deserve to be abandoned to your fates, but I pity the women and children who are crying. I pardon you. Listen!"

All the negroes bowed their heads submissively, and gathered round him.

"Only the white men," continued Tamango, "know the mystic formulas which guide these massive wooden houses; but we can steer without difficulty those small boats, which are like our own" (he pointed to the sloop and the other ship's boats). "Let us fill them with provisions, set out in them, and row in the direction of the wind. My Master and yours will make it blow in the direction of our homes."

They took his word for it. No plan could have been more reckless. Without any knowledge of the compass, ignorant as to their whereabouts, they could not do anything but row at random. His belief was that by rowing straight ahead they were certain to come, sooner or later, to a land inhabited by black men; for he had heard his mother say that white men lived in their ships, and that black men possessed the earth.

Soon afterward everything was ready to be embarked, but only the sloop and one small boat were found to be serviceable. It was impossible to find room for the eighty negroes who were still alive, so the sick and wounded had to be abandoned. The majority of them begged to be slain rather than be left.

After endless difficulties the two boats were got under way, so heavily laden that they might at any moment be swamped in such a choppy sea. Tamango and Ayché were in the sloop, which was soon left behind by the other boat—a mere cock-boat, and far less overcharged. The wailing of the poor wretches who had been left behind on board the brig was still audible when a big wave suddenly caught the sloop athwart and swamped her. In less than a minute she had disappeared. The smaller boat saw the catastrophe, and immediately the oars were plied with redoubled energy, for fear of having to pick up those who were shipwrecked. Nearly all who were in the sloop were drowned. Only a dozen or so managed to reach the vessel again; amongst whom were Tamango and Ayché. When the sun set they could see the other boat far away on the horizon; no one knows what became of it.

Why should I weary the reader with a revolting description of the tortures of famine?

About a score of human beings, crowded together, now tossed about on a stormy sea, now scorched by the fierce heat of the sun, fought daily for what scanty remains of food there were—every scrap of biscuit entailing a fight. . . . The weaker died, not because the stronger killed him, but because he chose to let him expire. After a few days only two were still alive on board the good brig *Hope*—Ayché and Tamango.

One night the sea was rough, the wind blew high, and the darkness was so intense that one end of the ship could not be seen from the other. Ayché lay on a mattress in the captain's room and Tamango sat at her feet. They had not spoken a word for many hours.

"Tamango," murmured Ayché at length, "it is I who have brought all this suffering upon you."

"I do not suffer," he answered quickly, and threw the half-biscuit, which he still had left, on the mattress beside her.

"Keep it yourself," she said gently, returning the biscuit. "I am no longer hungry. Besides, why eat? Is not mine hour come?"

Tamango got up without answering and staggered to the deck, where he sat down against the stump of the mast. His head lolled on his

breast, and he began to whistle his tribal war song. Suddenly a loud cry reached his ear in spite of the noise of the tempest; a light flashed; other shouts followed, and a huge black ship glided swiftly past the brig—so close that Tamango could see her yards pass over his head. He only saw two faces in the light of a lantern which hung from a mast. They shouted again; then their vessel, swept along by the storm, disappeared into the darkness. Doubtless the men on watch had caught sight of the disabled hulk, but the violence of the tempest had prevented their tacking. The next moment Tamango saw the flash of a cannon and heard the report; then another flash, but no report; then he saw nothing more. On the morrow not a sail was visible on the horizon. Tamango threw himself down on his mattress and closed his eyes. His wife Ayché had died that night.

I do not know how long it was before an English frigate, the *Bellona,* sighted a dismasted vessel, to all appearances abandoned by her crew. They sent a sloop alongside and found a negress dead and a negro by her side, so haggard and so thin that he looked like a skeleton. He was unconscious, but there was still a breath left in him. The doctor took charge of him and did all he could for him, so that when they

reached Kingston, Tamango had regained his health. He was asked to give an account of his adventures, and he told them all he could remember. The Jamaica planters suggested that he should be hung as a rebel, but the governor was a kind-hearted man and took an interest in the negro, whose crime was, after all, justifiable, since he had but acted in self-defence; and, besides, the men he had murdered were only Frenchmen. He was treated in the same way as the slaves who are found on board a captured slave trader. They set him at liberty—that is to say they made him work for the Government. And he earned threepence a day besides his keep. One day the colonel of the 75th caught sight of this splendid specimen of a man, and made him a drummer in his regimental band. Tamango learnt a little English, but hardly ever spoke. To make up for that he was always drinking rum or tafia. He died in the hospital of congestion of the lungs.

1829.

THE PEARL OF TOLEDO

La Perle de Tolède

In the Spanish Style

THE PEARL OF TOLEDO

WHO can tell me when the sun is most beautiful, at rising, or at setting? Who can tell me whether of the Olive or the Almond is the most beautiful of trees? Who can tell me whether Andalusia or Valencia sends forth the bravest knight? What man can tell me who is the fairest of women? I will tell you who is the fairest of women. She is Aurora de Vargas, the Pearl of Toledo.

Swarthy Tuzani has called for his lance, he has called for his buckler; his lance he grasps in his strong right hand; his buckler hangs from his neck. He goes down to his stable, and considers well his forty good steeds; in due order he considers them all, and he says:

"Berja is the fleetest and trustiest of all. On her strong back will I carry away the Pearl of Toledo, as mine will I bear her away, or by Allah, Cordova shall see me no more."

So he sets forth and he rides on his way, till at length he reaches Toledo, and he meets an old man hard by Zucatin.

"Old man, with the snowy beard, carry this

letter to Don Guttiera, to Don Guttiera de Saldaña. If he is a man he will come and meet me in single combat, near to the fountain of Almami. The Pearl of Toledo must belong to one of us two."

The old man has taken the letter, he has taken and carried it to the Count de Saldaña, as he sat playing chess with the Pearl of Toledo. The Count has read the letter, he has read the parchment, and with his closed fist does he smite the table so mightily that all the chessmen have fallen to the ground. Then he rises and calls for his lance and his good steed, and all trembling does the Pearl of Toledo arise, for she has perceived and understood that he is going forth to combat.

"My Lord Guttiera de Saldaña, go not hence I pray, go not hence, but play still this game with me."

"No longer will I play at chess; I will play at the game of lances by the fountain of Almami."

And the tears of Aurora availed not to stay him; for naught stays a knight who goes forth to combat. Then the Pearl of Toledo took her mantle, and mounting upon her mule she went her way to the fountain of Almami.

All about the fountain is the grass crimson,

crimson too the waters of the fountain; but it is not the blood of a Christian that stains the green sward, that stains the waters of the fountain. The swarthy Tuzani lies there with his face to the sky. The lance of Don Guttiera is splintered in his breast: all his life blood spends itself drop by drop. His faithful steed, Berja, looks down upon him weeping, for she can not heal the wound of her master.

The Pearl of Toledo alights from her mule. "Take heart, good sir, for you will live yet to wed some fair Moorish maiden; my hand has cunning to heal the wound made by my knight."

"O Pearl so white, O Pearl so fair, draw forth from my breast the splinter of lance which rends it. The cold of the steel chills me and freezes my heart."

In all confidence she approached him, but he, with a last effort, gathered together his failing strength, and with his sabre's sharp blade, gashed the face so fair, so tender.

THE GAME OF BACKGAMMON

La Partie de Trictrac

THE GAME OF BACKGAMMON

THE sails hung motionless, clinging to the masts; the sea was as smooth as glass; the heat was stifling and the calm discouraging.

During a sea voyage the resources of amusement open to passengers on board ship are soon exhausted. Anyone who has spent four months together in a wooden house of one hundred and twenty feet in length knows this fact, alas! only too well. When you see the first lieutenant coming toward you you know that he will first begin talking about Rio de Janeiro, from whence he came; then of the famous Essling Bridge, which he saw made by the Marine Guards to which he belonged. After the fifteenth day you know exactly the expressions he is fond of, even the punctuation of his sentences and the different intonations of his voice. When did he ever miss dwelling sadly on the word "emperor" when he pronounced it for the first time in his recital? . . . He invariably added, "If you had only seen him then ! ! !" (three exclamation marks to denote his admiration). And the incident of

the trumpeter's horse, and the ball that rebounded and carried away a cartridge-box which contained seven thousand five hundred francs in money and jewellery, etc., etc.! The second lieutenant is a great politician; he makes critical remarks every day on the last number of the *Constitutionnel* which he brought from Brest, or, if he leaves the sublime heights of politics to descend to literature, he sets you to rights on the last vaudeville he saw played. Good Lord! The Commissioner of the Navy has a very interesting story to relate. How he enchanted us the first time he told us his escape from the pontoon at Cadiz, but, by the twentieth repetition, upon my word, it is barely endurable! . . .

And the ensigns and the midshipmen! . . . The recollection of their conversation makes my hair stand on end. Generally speaking, the captain is the least tedious person on board. In his position of despotic commander he is in a state of secret hostility against the whole staff; he annoys and oppresses at times, but there is a certain amount of pleasure to be gained by inveighing against him. If he is furiously angry with some of his subordinates, his superior tone is a pleasure to listen to, which is some slight consolation.

On board the vessel on which I was sailing

the officers were the best fellows going, all good company, liking each other as brothers, but bored of each other all the same. The captain was the gentlest of men, and, what is very rare, was nothing of a busybody. He was always unwilling to exercise his authoritative power. But, in spite of all, the voyage seemed terribly long, especially when the calm set in which overtook us a few days only before we made land! . . .

One day, after dinner, which want of employment had made us spin out as long as it was humanly possible, we were all assembled on the bridge, watching the monotonous but ever majestic spectacle of a sunset over the sea. Some were smoking, others were re-reading for the twentieth time one of the thirty volumes which comprised our wretched library; all were yawning till the tears ran down their cheeks. One ensign, who was sitting by me, was amusing himself, with the gravity worthy of a serious occupation, by letting the poniard, worn ordinarily by naval officers in undress, fall, point downward, on the planks of the deck. It was as amusing as anything else on board, and required skill to throw the point so that it should stick in the wood quite perpendicularly. I wanted to follow the ensign's example, and, not having a poniard with me, I tried to borrow the captain's,

but he refused it me. He was singularly attached to that weapon, and it would have vexed him to see it put to such a futile use. It had formerly belonged to a brave officer who had been mortally wounded in the last war. I guessed a story would be forthcoming, nor was I mistaken. The captain began before he was asked for it, but the officers, who stood round us, and who knew the misfortunes of Lieutenant Roger by heart, soon beat a circumspect retreat. Here is the captain's story almost in his own words:

Roger was three years older than I when I first knew him; he was a lieutenant and I was an ensign. He was quite one of the best officers on our staff; he was, moreover, good-natured, talented, quick and well educated; in a word, he was a fascinating young fellow. But unfortunately he was rather proud and sensitive; this arose, I think, from the fact of his being an illegitimate child, and his fear that his birth might make people look down upon him; but, to tell the truth, the greatest of all his faults was a passionate and ever-present desire to take the lead wherever he was. His father, whom he had never seen, made him an allowance which would have been more than enough for his needs, had he not been the soul of generosity. All that he

had was at the service of his friends. When he drew his quarter's pay, and met a friend with a sad and anxious face, he would say—

"Why, mate, what's the matter? You look as though you had difficulty in making your pockets jingle when you slap them; come, here is my purse, take what you want, and have dinner with me."

A very pretty young actress came to Brest named Gabrielle, and she quickly made conquest among the naval and army officers. She was not a perfect beauty, but she had a good figure, fine eyes, a small foot and a pleasant, saucy manner; these things are all very delightful when one is voyaging between the latitudes of twenty and twenty-five years of age. She was, in addition, the most capricious of her sex, and her style of playing did not belie this reputation. Sometimes she played enchantingly, and one would have called her a *comédienne* of the highest order; on the following day she would be cold and lifeless in the very same piece: she would deliver her part as a child recites its catechism. But more than all else it was the story told of her which I am about to relate that interested our young men. It seems she had been kept in sumptuous style by a Parisian senator, who, it was said, committed all sorts of follies for her sake. One day this

man put his hat on in her house; she begged him to take it off, and even complained that he showed a want of respect toward her. The senator burst out laughing, shrugged his shoulders and said, as he elaborately settled himself in his chair, "The least I can do is to make myself at home in the house of a girl whom I keep." Gabrielle's white hand smacked his face as soundly as though she had a navvy's hand, and she also paid him back for his words by throwing his hat to the other end of the room. From that moment there was a complete rupture between them. Bankers and generals made considerable offers to the lady, but she refused them all and became an actress, so that she could, as she expressed it, live independently.

When Roger saw her and learnt her history, he decided that she was—must be his, and with the somewhat uncouth freedom with which we sailors are credited, he took the following methods to show her how much he was affected by her charms. He bought the rarest and loveliest flowers to be found in Brest, had them made into a bouquet which he tied with a beautiful rose-coloured ribbon, and in the knot he carefully placed a roll of twenty-five napoleons, all he possessed for the time being. I remember accompanying him behind the scenes during an interval

between the acts. He paid Gabrielle a brief compliment upon the grace with which she wore her costume, offered her the bouquet and asked leave to call upon her. He managed to get through all this in about three words.

Whilst Gabrielle only saw the flowers and the handsome youth who offered them to her, she smiled upon him, accompanying her smile with a most gracious bow; but when she held the bouquet between her hands and felt the weight of the gold, her face changed more rapidly than the surface of the sea when roused by a tropical hurricane; and certainly it could scarcely have looked more evil, for she hurled the bouquet and the napoleons with all her strength at my poor friend's head, so that he carried the marks of it on his face for more than a week after. The manager's bell rang and Gabrielle went on and played wildly.

Covered with confusion, Roger picked up his bouquet and packet of gold, went to a café, offered the bouquet (but not the money) to the girl at the desk, and tried to forget his cruel mistress in a glass of punch. But he did not succeed, and, in spite of his vexation at not being able to show himself without a black eye, he fell madly in love with the enraged Gabrielle. He wrote her twenty letters a day, and such letters!

—abject, tender, full of obsequious phrases that might have been addressed to a princess. The first were returned to him unopened, and the rest received no answer. Roger, however, kept up hope, until he discovered that the theatre orange-seller wrapped up his oranges in Roger's love-letters, which Gabrielle, with the very refinement of maliciousness, had given him. This was a terrible blow to our friend's pride; but his passion did not die out. He talked of asking the actress to marry him, and threatened to blow his brains out when we told him that the Minister for Marine Affairs would never give his consent.

While all this was going on the officers of a regiment of the line in the garrison at Brest wished to make Gabrielle repeat a vaudeville couplet, and she refused the encore out of pure caprice. The officers and the actress both remained so obstinate that it came to the former hooting until the curtain had to be dropped and the latter left the stage. You know what the pit of a garrison town is like. The officers plotted together to hiss her without intermission the next day and for a few days after, and not allow her to play a single part unless she made humble amends for her bad behaviour. Roger had taken no part in these proceedings; but he heard of the scandal which put the whole

theatre in an uproar that very night, and also the plans for revenge which were being hatched for the morrow. He immediately made up his mind what he would do.

When Gabrielle made her appearance the next night an ear-splitting noise of hooting and cat-calls rose from the officers' seats. Roger, who had purposely placed himself near the roisterers, got up and harangued the noisiest in such scathing language that the whole of their fury was soon turned on himself. He then drew his note-book from his pocket, and, with the utmost *sang-froid,* wrote down the names cried out to him from all sides; he would have arranged to fight with the whole regiment if a great many naval officers had not come up, out of loyalty to their order, and taken part against his adversaries. The hubbub was something frightful.

The whole garrison was confined for several days, but when we regained liberty, there was a terrible score to settle. There were threescore of us at the rendezvous. Roger, alone, fought three officers in succession; he killed one, and badly wounded the other two without receiving a scratch. I, as luck would have it, came off less fortunately; a cursed lieutenant, who had been a fencing master, gave me a neat thrust through the chest which nearly finished me. The duel,

or rather battle, was a fine sight, I can tell you. The naval officers had gained the victory, and the regiment was obliged to leave Brest.

You may guess that our superior officers did not overlook the author of the quarrel. They placed a guard outside his door for a fortnight.

When his term of arrest was over I came out of hospital and went to see him. Judge my surprise when I entered his room and found him sitting at breakfast *tête-à-tête* with Gabrielle. They seemed to have been on friendly terms for some time, and already called each other thee and thou, and drank out of the same glass. Roger introduced me to his mistress as his dearest friend, and told her I had been wounded in the slight skirmish on her behalf. This charming young girl then condescended to kiss me, for all her sympathies were with fighters.

They spent three months together in perfect happiness, and never left each other for a moment. Gabrielle seemed to love him to distraction, and Roger declared that he had never known love before he met Gabrielle.

One day a Dutch frigate came into harbour. The officers gave us a dinner, and we drank deeply of all sorts of wines; but when the cloth was removed, we did not know what to do, for these gentlemen spoke very bad French. We

began to play. The Dutchmen seemed to have plenty of money; and their first lieutenant especially offered to play such high stakes that none of us cared to take a hand with him. But Roger, who did not play as a rule, felt it incumbent upon him to uphold the honour of his country in the matter. So he played for the stakes that the Dutch lieutenant fixed. At first he gained, then he lost, and after several ups and downs of gaining and losing they stopped without anything having been done on either side. We returned this dinner, and invited the Dutch officers. Again we played, and Roger and the lieutenant set to work afresh. In short, they played for several days, meeting either in cafés or on board ship; they tried all kinds of games, backgammon more than any, always increasing their wagers until they came to the point of playing for twenty-five napoleons each game. It was an enormous sum for poverty-stricken officers like us—more than two months' pay! At the week's end Roger had lost every penny he possessed, and more than three or four thousand francs which he had borrowed on all sides.

You will gather that Roger and Gabrielle had ended by sharing household and purse in common, that is to say that Roger, who had just received a large payment on account of his al-

lowance, contributed ten or twenty times more than the actress. He always considered that this sum, large as was his share in it, belonged chiefly to his mistress, and he had only kept back for his own expenses about fifty napoleons. He was, however, obliged to draw from this reserve to go on playing, and Gabrielle did not make the slightest objection.

The housekeeping money went the same way as his pocket-money. Very soon Roger was reduced to playing his last twenty-five napoleons. The game was long and hotly contested, and it was horrible to see the intense efforts Roger made to gain it. The moment came when Roger, who held the dice-box, had only one more chance left to win; I think he wanted to get six, four. The night was far advanced, and an officer who had been looking at their play had fallen asleep in an armchair. The Dutchman was tired out and drowsy; moreover, he had drunk too much punch. Roger alone was wide awake and a prey to the depths of despair. He trembled as he threw the dice. He threw them so roughly upon the board that the shock knocked a candle over on to the floor. The Dutchman turned his head first toward the candle, which had covered his new trousers with wax, then he looked at the dice. They showed six and four. Roger, who

was as pale as death, received his twenty-five napoleons, and they went on playing. Chance again favoured my unlucky friend, who, however, made blunder upon blunder, and secured points as though he wanted to lose. The Dutch lieutenant lost his head, and doubled and quadrupled his stakes; he lost every time. I can see him now—a tall, fair man of a phlegmatic nature, whose face seemed made of wax. At last he got up, after he lost forty thousand francs, and paid it without his features betraying the least trace of emotion.

"We will not take into account what we have played for to-night," said Roger. "You were more than half asleep. I do not want your money."

"You are joking," replied the phlegmatic Dutchman; "I played well, but the dice were against me. I am quite capable of winning off you always. Good evening!"

And he went out.

We learnt next day that, made desperate by his losses, he had blown out his brains in his room, after drinking a bowl of punch.

The forty thousand francs that Roger had won from him were spread out on the table, and Gabrielle gazed at them with a smile of satisfaction.

"See how rich we are!" she said. "What shall we do with all this money?"

Roger did not answer her; he seemed stunned since the Dutchman's death.

"We can do a thousand delicious things," she went on. "Money gained so easily ought to be spent as lightly. Let us set up a carriage, and snap our fingers at the Maritime Prefect and his wife. I want some diamonds and some Cashmere shawls. Ask for a holiday, and let us go to Paris; we could never spend so much money here!"

She stopped to look at Roger, whose eyes were fixed on the ceiling; his head was leant on his hand, and he had not heard a word; he seemed to be a prey to the most miserable thoughts.

"What on earth's wrong with you, Roger?" she cried, leaning her hand on his shoulder. "You will make me pull faces at you presently. I can not get a word out of you."

"I am very unhappy," he said at length, with a smothered sigh.

"Unhappy! Why, I do believe you regret having pinked that big *mynheer*."

He raised his head and looked at her with haggard eyes.

"What does it matter?" she went on. "Why mind if he did take the thing tragically

and blew out his few brains? I don't pity losing players; and his money is better in our hands than in his. He would have wasted it in drinking and smoking, whilst we will do a thousand lovely things with it, each one nicer than the last."

Roger walked about the room with his head bent on his breast, his eyes half closed and filled with tears. "You would have been sorry for him if you had seen him."

"Don't you know," said Gabrielle to him, "that people who do not know how romantically sensitive you are might imagine you had been cheating?"

"And if it were the truth?" he cried in hollow tones, stopping before her.

"Bah!" she answered, smiling; "you are not clever enough to cheat at play."

"Yes, I cheated, Gabrielle; I cheated—wretch that I am!"

She understood from his agitation of mind that he spoke but too truly. She sat down on a couch and remained speechless for some time.

"I would much rather you had killed ten men than cheated at play," she said at length in a very troubled voice.

There was a deathlike silence for half an hour. They both sat on the same sofa, and never

looked at each other once. Roger got up first and wished her good night in a calm voice.

"Good night," she replied in cold and hard tones.

Roger has since told me that he would have killed himself that very day if he had not been afraid that his comrades would have guessed the reason for his suicide. He did not wish his memory to be disgraced.

Gabrielle was as gay as usual next day. She seemed, already, to have forgotten the confidences of the previous evening. But Roger became gloomy, capricious and morose. He avoided his friends, and scarcely left his rooms, often passing a whole day without saying a word to his mistress. I attributed his melancholy to an honourable, but excessive sensitiveness, and tried several times to console him; but he put me at a distance by affecting a supreme indifference toward his unhappy partner. One day he even inveighed against the Dutch nation in violent terms, and tried to make me believe that there was not a single honourable man in Holland. All the same, he tried secretly to find out the Dutch lieutenant's relatives; but no one could give him any information about them.

Six weeks after that unlucky game of backgammon Roger found a note in Gabrielle's

rooms, written by an admirer who thanked her for the kind feeling she had shown him. Gabrielle was the very personification of untidiness, and the note in question had been left by her on her mantelpiece. I do not know whether she was unfaithful to Roger or not, but he believed her to be so, and his anger was frightful. His love and a remnant of pride were the only feelings which still attached him to life, and the strongest of these sentiments was thus suddenly destroyed. He overwhelmed the proud actress with insults; and was so violent that I do not know how he refrained from striking her.

"No doubt," he said to her, "this puppy gave you lots of money. It is the only thing you love. You would give yourself to the dirtiest of our sailors if he had anything to pay you with."

"Why not?" retorted the actress icily. "Yes, I would take payment from a sailor; but *I should not have stolen it!*"

Roger uttered a cry of rage. He tremblingly drew his sword, and for one second looked at Gabrielle with the eyes of a madman; then he collected himself with a tremendous effort, threw the weapon at her feet, and rushed from the room to prevent himself yielding to the temptation which beset him.

That same evening I passed his lodging at

a late hour, and, seeing his light burning, I went in to borrow a book. I found him busy, writing. He did not disturb himself, and scarcely seemed to notice my presence in his room. I sat down by his desk and studied his features; they were so much altered that anyone else but I would hardly have recognised him. All at once I noticed a letter already sealed on his desk, addressed to myself. I immediately opened it. In it Roger announced to me his intention to put an end to himself, and gave me various instructions to carry out. While I read this, he went on writing the whole time without noticing me. He was bidding farewell to Gabrielle. You can judge of my astonishment, and of what I felt bound to say to him. I was thunderstruck by his decision.

"What! you want to kill yourself when you are so happy?"

"My friend," he said, as he hid his letter, "you know nothing about it; you do not know me; I am a rascal; I am so guilty that a prostitute has power to insult me; and I am so aware of my baseness that I have no power to strike her."

He then related the story of the game of backgammon, and all that you already know. As I listened I was as moved as he was. I did not

know what to say to him; with tears in my eyes I pressed his hands, but I could not speak. Then the idea came to me to try and show him that he need not reproach himself with having intentionally caused the ruin of the Dutchman, and that, after all, he had only made him lose, by his . . . cheating . . . twenty-five napoleons.

"Then," he cried, with bitter irony, "I am a petty thief and not a great one. I, who was so ambitious, to be nothing but a scurvy little scoundrel!"

He shrieked with laughter.

I burst into tears.

Suddenly the door opened and Gabrielle rushed into his arms.

"Forgive me!" she cried, strangling him almost in her passion; "forgive me! I know it now; I love only you; and I love you better now than if you had not done what you blame yourself for. If you like, I will steal; I have stolen before now. . . . Yes, I have stolen; I took a gold watch. . . . What worse could one do?"

Roger shook his head incredulously, but his face seemed to brighten.

"No, my poor child," he said, gently repulsing her. "I must kill myself; there is no other

course for me. I suffer so greatly that I can not bear my grief."

"Very well, then, if you intend to die, Roger, I shall die with you. What is life to me without you? I have plenty of courage; I have fired pistols; I shall kill myself like anyone else. Besides, I have played at tragedy and am used to it." At first there were tears in her eyes, but this last idea amused her, and even Roger could not help smiling with her. "You are laughing, my soldier-boy," she cried, clapping her hands and hugging him; "you will not kill yourself."

All the time she embraced him she was first crying, then laughing, then swearing like a sailor; for she was not, like many women, afraid of a coarse word.

In the meantime I possessed myself of Roger's pistols and poniard; then I turned to him and said—

"My dear Roger, you have a mistress and a friend who love you. Believe me, there can still be happiness for you in this life." I embraced him and went out, leaving him alone with Gabrielle.

I do not believe we should have succeeded in doing more than delaying his fatal design if he had not received an order from the Admiralty

to set out as first lieutenant on board a frigate bound for a cruise in the Indian seas—if it could first cross the lines of the English fleet, which blockaded the port. It was a dangerous venture. I put it to him that it would be much better to die nobly by an English bullet than to put an inglorious end to his life himself, without rendering any service to his country. So he promised to live. He distributed half the forty thousand francs to maimed sailors or the widows and orphans of seamen; the rest he gave to Gabrielle, who at first vowed to him only to use the money for charitable purposes. She fully meant to keep her word, poor girl! but enthusiasm with her was short-lived. I have heard since that she gave some thousands of francs to the poor, but she spent the remainder on finery.

Roger and I boarded the fine frigate *La Galatée;* our men were brave, experienced, and well-drilled, but our commander was an idiot, who thought himself a Jean Bart because he could swear better than an army captain, because he murdered French, and because he had never studied the theory of his profession, the practice of which he understood only very indifferently. However, fate favoured us at the outset. We got well out of the roadstead—thanks to a gust of wind which compelled the

blockading fleet to give us a wide berth—and we began our cruise by burning an English sloop and an East Indiaman off the coast of Portugal.

We were slowly sailing toward the Indian seas, hampered by contrary winds and our captain's bad handling of the ship, whose stupidity increased the danger of our cruise. Sometimes we were chased by superior forces, sometimes pursued by merchant vessels; we did not pass a single day without some fresh adventure. But neither the risky life he led nor the labours caused him by the irksome ship-duties devolving upon him could distract Roger from the sad thoughts which unceasingly haunted him. He who was once considered the most brilliant and active officer in our port now found it almost a burden to fulfil simply his duty. As soon as he was off duty he would shut himself in his cabin without either books or papers, and the unhappy man passed whole hours lying in his cot, for he could not sleep.

One day, noticing his depression, I ventured to say to him—

"Good gracious, my boy, you grieve over nothing! Granted you filched twenty-five napoleons from a big Dutchman, you show as much remorse as though you had taken more than a

million. Now, tell me, when you loved the wife of the Prefect of . . . did you mind at all? Nevertheless, she was worth more than twenty-five napoleons."

He turned over on his mattress without a word.

"After all," I continued, "your crime, since you persist in calling it so, had an honourable motive and arose from a lofty mind."

He turned his head and looked at me furiously.

"Yes, for if you had lost what would have become of Gabrielle? She—poor girl!—would have sold her last garment for you. . . . If you had lost she would have been reduced to misery. . . . It was for her, out of love for her, you cheated. There are people who die for love . . . will kill themselves for it. . . . You, my dear Roger, did more. For a man of our order it takes more courage to . . . steal, to put it baldly, than to commit suicide."

("Now, perhaps," the captain interrupted his story to say, "I appear ridiculous to you. I assure you that my friendship for Roger endowed me with a timely eloquence that I am not equal to nowadays; and, devil take it, in saying what I did I spoke in good earnest, and I believed all I said. Ah, I was young then!")

Roger did not make any answer for a long time; then he held out his hand to me.

"My friend," he said, making a great effort over himself, "you think too well of me. I am a cowardly wretch. When I cheated the Dutchman my only thought was to win the twenty-five napoleons, that was all. I never thought of Gabrielle, and that is why I despise myself. . . . I, to hold my honour in less esteem than twenty-five napoleons! . . . What baseness! Yes, I could be happy if I could tell myself I stole to keep Gabrielle from wretchedness. . . . No! . . . no! I did not think of her. . . . I was not in love at that moment. . . . I was a player. . . . I was a thief. . . . I stole money to possess it myself, . . . and the deed has so degraded me, and debased me, that I now have no more courage left nor love. . . . I can see it; I do not think any longer of Gabrielle. . . . I am a broken-down man."

He was so wretched, that if he had asked me to hand him his pistols to kill himself I believe I should have given them to him.

One Friday, that day of ill omen, we discovered that a big English frigate, the *Alcestis,* was chasing us. She carried fifty-eight guns, and we but thirty-eight. We put on all sail to escape

from her, but her pace was faster than ours, and she gained on us every minute. It was very evident that before night we should be obliged to engage in an unequal battle. Our captain called Roger to his cabin, where they consulted together for more than a quarter of an hour. Roger came up on the deck again, took me by the arm, and drew me aside.

"In two hours' time," he said, "we shall be engaged. That rash man who struts the quarter-deck has lost his wits. He has two courses to choose from: the first, and the most honourable, would be to let the enemy come up to us, then to board the ship determinedly with a hundred or so of our best men; the other course, which is not bad, but rather cowardly, is to lighten ourselves by throwing some of our guns overboard. Then we could make for the near coast of Africa, which we shall soon find to larboard. The English captain would soon be obliged to give up the chase, for fear of grounding; but our . . . captain is neither coward nor hero. He will let himself be destroyed by gunshots a good distance off, and after some hours' fight he will honourably lower his flag. So much the worse for you. The Portsmouth pontoons will be your fate. I have no desire to see them."

"Possibly," I said, "our first shots will damage the enemy sufficiently to compel her to abandon the chase."

"Listen, I do not mean to be taken prisoner; I shall kill myself. It is time I ended it all. If by ill luck I am only wounded, give me your word of honour that you will throw me overboard. It is the proper death-bed for a good sailor."

"What nonsense!" I exclaimed. "What a charge to make me undertake!"

"You will be fulfilling the duty of a true friend. You know I shall have to die. I have only consented not to take my own life in the hope of being killed; you must remember that. Come, promise me this; if you refuse, I shall go and ask this service from the boatswain's mate, who will not refuse me."

After reflecting for some time, I said to him—

"I give you my word to do what you wish, provided that you are mortally wounded, with no hope of recovery. In that case I consent to spare you further suffering."

"I shall be mortally wounded or I shall be killed outright."

He held out his hand to me, and I shook it firmly. After that he was calmer, and even a

kind of martial cheerfulness shone in his face. Toward three o'clock in the afternoon the enemy's guns began to play in our rigging. We then clewed up some of our sails, crossed the bows of the *Alcestis,* and started a rattling fire, which the English returned vigorously. After about an hour's fight our captain, who did nothing methodically, wanted to try to board the enemy; but we had already many dead and wounded, and the remainder of our crew had lost heart. Our rigging, besides, had suffered severely, and our masts were badly damaged. Just as we were taking in sail, to approach the English vessel, our large mast, which had nothing to stay it, fell with a horrible noise. The *Alcestis* took advantage of the confusion into which this accident threw us. She came broadside up to our stern and opened fire upon us within half a pistol range of us; she riddled shot through our unfortunate frigate fore and aft, and we were only in a position to point two small guns at her. At that moment I was standing near Roger, who was busy trying to cut the shrouds which still held the fallen mast. I felt my arm pressed forcibly; I turned round and saw him laid flat on the deck covered with blood. He had received a charge of grape-shot in the stomach.

"What can we do, lieutenant?" cried the captain, running up.

"Nail our flag to this piece of mast and sink the ship."

The captain left him at that, for he did not in the least relish the advice.

"Come," said Roger, "remember your promise."

"It is nothing," I said; "you will get over it."

"Throw me overboard!" he cried, and he swore fearfully and seized me by my coat-tails; "you see well enough that I can not recover. Throw me into the sea; I do not want to see our flag taken."

Two sailors came up to carry him below.

"To your guns, you knaves!" he cried with all his strength: "use grape-shot, and aim on the deck. And as for you, if you fail to keep your word I will curse you and think of you as the most cowardly and vile of men!"

His wound was certainly mortal. I saw the captain call a midshipman and give him the order to lower the flag.

"Give me a shake of the hand," I said to Roger. And at that moment our flag was lowered. . . .

"Captain, there is a whale to larboard!" interrupted an ensign, running to us.

"A whale?" cried the captain joyfully and leaving his story unfinished. "Quick! launch the longboat and the yawl, too! All longboats into the water! Bring the harpoons and ropes!" . . .

I never knew how poor Lieutenant Roger died.

1830.

THE ETRUSCAN VASE

Le Vase Étrusque

THE ETRUSCAN VASE

AUGUSTE SAINT-CLAIR was not at all a favourite in Society, the chief reason being that he only cared to please those who took his own fancy. He avoided the former and sought after the latter. In other respects he was absent-minded and indolent. One evening, on coming out of the Italian Opera, the Marquise A—— asked him his opinion on the singing of Mlle. Sontag. "Yes, Madam," Saint-Clair replied, smiling pleasantly, and thinking of something totally different. This ridiculous reply could not be set down to shyness, for he talked with great lords and noted men and women and even with Society women with as much ease as though he were their equal. The Marquise put down Saint-Clair as a stupid, impertinent boor.

One Monday he had an invitation to dine with Madam B——. She paid him a good deal of attention, and on leaving her house, he remarked that he had never met a more agreeable woman. Madam B—— spent a month collect-

ing witticisms at other people's houses, which she dispensed in one evening at her own. Saint-Clair called upon her again on the Thursday of the same week. This time he grew a little tired of her. Another visit decided him never to enter her salon again. Madam B—— gave out that Saint-Clair was an ill-bred young man, and not good form.

He was naturally tender-hearted and affectionate, but at an age when lasting impressions are taken too easily. His too demonstrative nature had drawn upon him the sarcasm of his comrades. He was proud and ambitious, and stuck to his opinion like an obstinate child. Henceforth he made a point of hiding any outward sign of what might seem discreditable weakness. He attained his end, but the victory cost him dear. He learnt to hide his softer feelings from others, but the repression only increased their force a hundredfold. In Society he bore the sorry reputation of being heartless and indifferent; and, when alone, his restless imagination conjured up hideous torments—all the worse because unshared.

How difficult it is to find a friend! Difficult! Is it possible to find two men anywhere who have not a secret from each other? That Saint-Clair had little faith in friendship was easily seen.

With young Society people his manner was cold and reserved. He asked no questions about their secrets; and most of his actions and all his thoughts were mysteries to them. A Frenchman loves to talk of himself; therefore Saint-Clair was the unwilling recipient of many confidences. His friends—that is to say, those whom he saw about twice a week—complained of his indifference to their confidences. They felt that indiscretion should be reciprocal; for, indeed, he who confides his secret to us unasked generally takes offence at not learning ours in return.

"He keeps his thoughts to himself," grumbled Alphonse de Thémines one day.

"I could never place the least confidence in that deuced Saint-Clair," added the smart colonel.

"I think he is half a Jesuit," replied Jules Lambert. "Someone swore to me that he had met him twice coming out of St. Sulpice. Nobody knows what he thinks about. I must say I never feel at ease with him."

They separated. Alphonse encountered Saint-Clair in the Boulevard Italien. He was walking with his eyes on the ground, not noticing anyone. Alphonse stopped him, took his arm, and, before they had reached the Rue de la Paix, he had related to him the whole history

of his love affairs with Madam ——, whose husband was so jealous and so violent.

The same evening Jules Lambert lost his money at cards. After that he thought he had better go and dance. While dancing, he accidentally knocked against a man, who had also lost his money and was in a very bad temper. Sharp words followed, and a challenge was given and taken. Jules begged Saint-Clair to act as his second, and, at the same time, borrowed money from him, which he was never likely to return.

After all, Saint-Clair was easy enough to live with. He was no one's enemy but his own; he was obliging, often genial, rarely tiresome; he had travelled much and read much, but never obtruded his knowledge or his experiences unasked. In personal appearance he was tall and well made; he had a dignified and refined expression—almost always too grave, but his smile was pleasing and very attractive.

I am forgetting one important point. Saint-Clair paid attention to all women, and sought their society more than that of men. It was difficult to say whether he was in love; but if this reserved being felt love, the beautiful Countess Mathilde de Coursy was the woman of his choice. She was a young widow, at whose house

he was often seen. To prove their friendship there was the evidence first of the almost exaggerated politeness of Saint-Clair toward the Countess, and *vice versâ;* then his habit of never pronouncing her name in public, or if obliged to speak of her, never with the slightest praise; also, before Saint-Clair was introduced to her, he had been passionately fond of music, and the Countess equally so of painting. Since they had become acquainted their tastes had changed. Lastly, when the Countess visited a health resort the previous year, Saint-Clair followed her in less than a week.

. . . . .

My duty as novelist obliges me to reveal that early one morning in the month of July, a few moments before sunrise, the garden gate of a country house opened, and a man crept out with the stealthiness of a burglar fearing discovery. This country house belonged to Madam de Coursy, and the man was Saint-Clair. A woman muffled in a cape, came to the gate with him, stood with her head out and watched him as long as she could, until he was far along the path which led by the park wall. Saint-Clair stopped, looked round cautiously, and signed with his hand for the woman to go in. The clearness of

a summer dawn enabled him to distinguish her pale face. She stood motionless where he had left her. He went back to her, and took her tenderly in his arms. He meant to compel her to go in; but he had still a hundred things to say to her. Their conversation lasted ten minutes, till at last they heard the voice of a peasant going to his work in the fields. One more kiss passed between them, the gate was shut, and Saint-Clair with a bound reached the end of the footpath. He followed a track evidently well known to him, and ran along, striking the bushes with his stick and almost jumping for joy. Sometimes he stopped, or sauntered slowly, looking at the sky, which was flushed in the east with purple. In fact, anyone meeting him would have taken him for an escaped lunatic. After half an hour's walk he reached the door of a lonely little house which he had rented for the season. He let himself in with a key, and then, throwing himself on the couch, he fell into a day-dream, with vacant eyes and a happy smile playing on his lips. His mind was filled with bright reflections. "How happy I am!" he kept repeating. "At last I have met a heart that understands mine. . . . Yes, I have found my ideal. . . . I have gained at the same time a friend and a lover. . . . What depth of soul! . . .

What character! . . . No, she has never loved anyone before me." How soon vanity creeps into human affairs! "She is the loveliest woman in Paris," he thought, and his imagination conjured up all her charms. "She has chosen me before all the others. She had the flower of Society at her feet. That colonel of hussars, gallant, good-looking and not too stout; that young author, who paints in water-colours so well, and who is such a capital actor; that Russian Lovelace, who has been in the Balkan campaign and served under Diébitch; above all, Camille T——, who is brilliantly clever, has good manners and a fine sabre-cut across his forehead. . . . She has dismissed them all for me! . . ." Then came the refrain—"Oh, how happy I am! how happy I am!" and he got up and opened the window, for he could scarcely breathe. First he walked about; then he tossed on his couch.

A happy lover is almost as tedious as an unhappy one. One of my friends, who is generally in one or other of these conditions, found that the only way of getting any attention was to give me an excellent breakfast, over which he could unburden himself on the subject of his amours. When the coffee was finished he was obliged to choose a totally different topic of conversation.

As I can not give breakfast to all my readers, I make them a present of Saint-Clair's ecstasies. Besides, it is impossible always to live in cloudland. Saint-Clair was tired; he yawned, stretched his arms, saw that it was broad day and at last slept. When he awoke he saw by his watch that he had hardly time to dress and rush off to Paris, to attend a luncheon-party of several of his young friends.

. . . . .

They had just uncorked another bottle of champagne. I leave my readers to guess how many had preceded it. It is sufficient to know that they had reached that stage which comes quickly enough at a young men's dinner-party, when everybody speaks at once, and when the steady heads get anxious for those who can not carry so much.

"I wish," said Alphonse de Thémines, who had never missed a chance of talking about England—"I wish that it was the custom in Paris, as it is in London, for each one to propose a toast to his mistress. If it were we should find out for whom our friend Saint-Clair sighs." And, while uttering these words, he filled up his own glass and those of his neighbours.

Saint-Clair felt slightly embarrassed, but was about to reply when Jules Lambert prevented him.

"I heartily approve this custom," he said, raising his glass; "and I adopt it. To all the milliners of Paris, with the exception of those past thirty, the one-eyed and the lame."

"Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted the anglomaniacs. Saint-Clair rose, glass in hand.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I have not such a large heart as has our friend Jules, but it is more constant—a constancy all the more faithful since I have been long separated from the lady of my thoughts. Nevertheless I am sure that you will approve of my choice, even if you are not already my rivals. To Judith Pasta, gentlemen! May we soon welcome back the first *tragédienne* of Europe."

Thémines was about to criticise the toast, but was interrupted by acclamation. Saint-Clair having parried this thrust, believed himself safe for the rest of the day.

The conversation turned first on theatres. From the criticism of the drama they wandered to political topics. From the Duke of Wellington they passed to English horses. From English horses to women, by a natural connection of ideas; for, to young men, a good horse first, and

then a beautiful mistress, are the two most desirable objects.

Then they discussed the means of acquiring these coveted treasures. Horses are bought, women also are bought; only we do not so talk of them. Saint-Clair, after modestly pleading inexperience in this delicate subject, gave as his opinion that the chief way to please a woman is to be singular, to be different from others. But he did not think it possible to give a general prescription for singularity.

"According to your view," said Jules, "a lame or hump-backed man would have a better chance of pleasing than one of ordinary make."

"You push things too far," retorted Saint-Clair, "but I am willing to accept all the consequences of my proposition. For example, if I were hump-backed, instead of blowing out my brains I would make conquests. In the first place, I would try my wiles on those who are generally tender-hearted; then on those women —and there are many of them—who set up for being original—eccentric, as they say in England. To begin with, I should describe my pitiful condition, and point out that I was the victim of Nature's cruelty. I should try to move them to sympathy with my lot, I should let them suspect that I was capable of a passionate love.

I should kill one of my rivals in a duel, and I should pretend to poison myself with a feeble dose of laudanum. After a few months they would not notice my deformity, and then I should be on the watch for the first signs of affection. With women who aspire to originality conquest is easy. Only persuade them that it is a hard-and-fast rule that a deformed person can never have a love affair, they will immediately then wish to prove the opposite."

"What a Don Juan!" cried Jules.

"As we have not had the misfortune of being born deformed," said Colonel Beaujeu, "we had better get our legs broken, gentlemen."

"I fully agree with Saint-Clair," said Hector Roquantin, who was only three and a half feet high. "We constantly see beautiful and fashionable women giving themselves to men whom you fine fellows would never dream of."

"Hector, just ring the bell for another bottle, will you?" said Thémines casually.

The dwarf got up and everyone smiled, recalling the fable of the fox without a tail.

"As for me," said Thémines, renewing the conversation, "the longer I live, the more clearly I see that the chief singularity which attracts even the most obdurate, is passable features"—and he threw a complaisant glance in a mirror

opposite—"passable features and good taste in dress," and he filliped a crumb of bread off his coat.

"Bah!" cried the dwarf, "with good looks and a coat by Staub, there are plenty of women to be had for a week at a time, but we should be tired of them at the second meeting. More than that is needed to win what is called love. . . . You must . . ."

"Stop!" interrupted Thémines. "Do you want an apt illustration? You all know what kind of man Massigny was. Manners like an English groom, and no more conversation than his horse. . . . But he was as handsome as Adonis, and could tie his cravat like Brummel. Altogether he was the greatest bore I have ever met."

"He almost killed me with weariness," said Colonel Beaujeu. "Only think, I once had to travel two hundred leagues with him!"

"Did you know," asked Saint-Clair, "that he caused the death of poor Richard Thornton, whom you all knew?"

"But," objected Jules, "I thought he was assassinated by brigands near Fondi?"

"Granted; but Massigny was at all events an accomplice in the crime. A party of travellers, Thornton among them, had arranged to go

to Naples together to avoid attacks from brigands. Massigny asked to be allowed to join them. As soon as Thornton heard this, he set out before the others, apparently to avoid being long with Massigny. He started alone, and you know the rest."

"Thornton took the only course," said Thémines; "he chose the easiest of two deaths. We should all have done the same in his place." Then, after a pause, "You grant me," he went on, "that Massigny was the greatest bore on earth?"

"Certainly," they all cried with one accord.

"Don't let us despair," said Jules; "let us make an exception in favour of . . . especially when he divulges his political intrigues."

"You will next grant me," continued Thémines, "that Madam de Coursy is as clever a woman as can be found anywhere."

A moment's silence followed. Saint-Clair looked down and fancied that all eyes were fixed on himself.

"Who disputes it?" he said at length, still bending over his plate apparently to examine more closely the flowers painted in the china.

"I maintain," said Jules, raising his voice—"I maintain that she is one of the three most fascinating women in Paris."

"I knew her husband," said the Colonel, "he often showed me her charming letters."

"Auguste," interrupted Hector Roquantin, "do introduce me to the Countess. They say you can do anything with her."

"When she returns to Paris at the end of autumn, . . ." murmured Saint-Clair, "I—I believe she does not entertain visitors in the country."

"Will you listen to me?" exclaimed Thémines.

Silence was restored. Saint-Clair fidgeted upon his chair like a prisoner before his judges.

"You did not know the Countess three years ago because you were then in Germany, Saint-Clair," went on Alphonse de Thémines, with aggravating coolness. "You can not form any idea, therefore, of her as she was then; lovely, with the freshness of a rose, and as light-hearted and gay as a butterfly. Perhaps you do not know that among all her many admirers Massigny was the one she honoured with her favours? The most stupid and ridiculous of men turned the head of the most fascinating amongst women. Do you suppose that a deformed person could have done as much? Nonsense; believe me, with a good figure and a first-rate tailor, only boldness in addition is needed."

Saint-Clair was in a most awkward position. He longed to fling back the lie direct in the speaker's face, but was restrained from fear of compromising the Countess. He would have liked to have said something to defend her, but he was tongue-tied. His lips trembled with rage, and he tried to find some indirect means of forcing a quarrel, but could not.

"What," exclaimed Jules, with astonishment, "Madam de Coursy gave herself to Massigny? Frailty, thy name is woman!"

"The reputation of a woman being of such small moment, it is, of course, allowable to pull it to pieces for the sake of a little sport," observed Saint-Clair in a dry and scornful tone, "and——"

But as he spoke he remembered with dismay a certain Etruscan vase that he had noticed a hundred times upon the mantelpiece in the Countess's house in Paris. He knew that it was a gift from Massigny, who had brought it back with him from Italy; and—overwhelming coincidence!—it had been taken by the Countess from Paris to her country house. Every evening when Mathilde took the flowers out of her dress she put them in this Etruscan vase.

Speech died upon his lips. He could neither

see nor think of anything but of that Etruscan vase.

"How absurd," cries a critic, "to suspect his mistress from such a trifle!"

"Have you ever been in love, my dear critic?"

Thémines was in too good a humour to take offence at the tone Saint-Clair had used when speaking to him, and replied lightly and with great good nature—

"I can only repeat what I heard in Society. It passed as a true story while you were in Germany. However, I scarcely know Madam de Coursy. It is eighteen months since I was at her house. Very likely I am wrong, and the story was a fabrication of Massigny's. But let us return to our discussion, for whether my illustration be false or not does not affect my point. You all know that the cleverest woman in France, whose works——"

The door opened, and Théodore Néville came in. He had just returned from Egypt.

"Théodore, you have soon come back!" He was overwhelmed with questions.

"Have you brought back a real Turkish costume?" asked Thémines. "Have you got an Arabian horse and an Egyptian groom?"

"What sort of man is the Pasha?" said

Jules. "When will he make himself independent? Have you seen a head cut off with a single stroke of the sabre?"

"And the *almées*," said Roquantin. "Are the Cairo women beautiful?"

"Did you meet General L——?" asked Colonel Beaujeu. "Has he organised the army of the Pasha? Did Colonel C—— give you a sword for me?"

"And the Pyramids? The cataracts of the Nile? And the statue of Memnon? Ibrahim Pasha?" etc. They all talked at once; Saint-Clair only brooded on the Etruscan vase.

Théodore sat cross-legged. He had learnt that habit in Egypt, and did not wish to lose it in France. He waited till his questioners were tired, and then spoke as fast as he could to save himself from being easily interrupted.

"The Pyramids! upon my word they are a regular humbug. They are not so high as I expected. Strasburg Cathedral is only four yards lower. I passed by the antiquities. Do not talk to me about them. The very sight of hieroglyphics makes me faint. There are plenty of travellers who worry themselves over these things! My object was to study the nature and manners of all the strange people that jostle against each other in the streets of Alexandria

and of Cairo. Turks, Bedouins, Copts, Fellahs, Môghrebins. I drew up a few hasty notes when I was in the quarantine hospital. What infamous places they are! I hope none of you fellows are nervous about infection! I smoked my pipe calmly in the midst of three hundred plague-stricken people. Ah! Colonel, you would admire the well-mounted cavalry out there. I must show you some superb weapons that I have brought back. I have a *djerid* which belonged to a famous Mourad Bey. I have a *yataghan* for you, Colonel, and a *khandjar* for Auguste. You must see my *metchlâ* and *bournous* and *hhaick*. Do you know I could have brought back any number of women with me? Ibrahim Pasha has such numbers imported from Greece that they can be had for nothing. . . . But I had to think of my mother's feelings. . . . I talked much with the Pasha. He is a thoroughly intelligent and unprejudiced man. You would hardly credit it, but he knows everything about our affairs. Upon my honour, he knows the smallest secrets of our Cabinet. I gleaned much valuable information from him on the state of parties in France. . . . Just now he is taken up with statistics. He subscribes to all our papers. Would you believe it?—he is a pronounced Bonapartist, and talks of nothing but

Napoleon. 'Ah! what a great man *Bounabardo* was!' he said to me; 'Bounabardo,' that is how he pronounces Bonaparte."

"Giourdina, meaning Jourdain," murmured Thémines.

"At first," continued Théodore, "Mohamed Ali was extremely reserved with me. All the Turks are very suspicious, you know, and he took me for a spy, or a Jesuit, the devil he did! He had a perfect horror of Jesuits. But, after several visits, he recognised that I was an unprejudiced traveller, anxious to inform myself at first hand of Eastern manners, customs and politics. Then he unbosomed himself and spoke freely to me. At the third and last audience he granted me I ventured to ask His Excellency why he did not make himself independent of the Porte. 'By Allah!' he replied, 'I wish it indeed, but I fear the Liberal papers which govern your country would not support me if I proclaimed the independence of Egypt.' He is a fine old man, with a long white beard. He never smiles. He gave us some first-rate confections; but the gift that pleased him most of all I offered him was a collection of costumes of the Imperial Guard by Charlet."

"Is the Pasha of a romantic turn of mind?" asked Thémines.

"He does not trouble himself much about literature; but you know, of course, that Arabian literature is entirely romantic. They have a poet called Melek Ayatalnefous-Ebn-Esraf, who has recently published a book of Meditations, compared with which Lamartine's read like classic prose. I took lessons in Arabic directly I got to Cairo, in order to read the Koran. I did not need to have many lessons before I was able to judge of the supreme beauty of the prophet's style, and of the baldness of all our translations. Look here, would you like to see Arabian handwriting? This word in gold letters is *Allah,* which means God."

As he spoke he showed them a very dirty letter, which he took out of a scented silk purse.

"How long were you in Egypt?" asked Thémines.

"Six weeks."

And the traveller proceeded to hold forth on everything from beginning to end. Saint-Clair left soon after his arrival, and went in the direction of his country house. The impetuous gallop of his horse prevented him from thinking consecutively, but he felt vaguely that his happiness in life had gone forever, and that it had been shattered by a dead man and an Etruscan vase.

After reaching home he threw himself on the same couch upon which he had dreamed for so long and so deliciously, and analysed his happiness the evening before. His most cherished dream had been that his mistress was different from other women, that she had not loved nor ever would love anyone but himself. Now this exquisite dream must perish in the light of a sad and cruel reality. "I have had a beautiful mistress, but nothing more. She is clever; she is therefore all the more to be blamed for loving Massigny! . . . I know she does love me now . . . with her whole soul . . . as she can love. But to be loved in the same fashion as Massigny has been loved! . . . She has yielded herself up to my attentions, my importunities, my whims. But I have been deceived. There has been no sympathy between us. Whether her lover were Massigny, or myself, was equally the same to her. He is handsome, and she loves him for his good looks. She amuses herself with me for a time. 'I may as well love Saint-Clair,' she says to herself, 'since the other is dead! And if Saint-Clair dies, or I tire of him, who knows?'

"I firmly believe the devil listens invisible behind a tortured wretch like myself. The enemy of mankind is tickled by the spectacle,

and as soon as the victim's wounds begin to heal, the devil is waiting to reopen them."

Saint-Clair thought he heard a voice murmur in his ears—

"The peculiar honour
Of being the successor. . . ."

He sat up on the couch and threw a savage glance round him. How glad he would have been to find someone in his room! He would have torn him limb from limb without any hesitation.

The clock struck eight. At eight-thirty the Countess expected him. Should he disappoint her? Why, indeed, should he ever see Massigny's mistress again? He lay down again on the couch and shut his eyes. "I will try to sleep," he said. He lay still for half a minute, then he leapt to his feet and ran to the clock to see how the time was going. "How I wish it were half-past eight!" he thought. "It would be too late then for me to start." If only he were taken ill. He had not the courage to stop at home unless he had an excuse. He walked up and down his room, then he sat down and took a book, but he could not read a syllable. He sat down in front of his piano, but had not enough energy to open it. He whistled; then he looked

out of his window at the clouds, and tried to count the poplars. At length he looked at the clock again, and saw that he had not succeeded in whiling away more than three minutes. "I can not help loving her," he burst out, grinding his teeth and stamping his feet; "she rules me, and I am her slave, just as Massigny was before me. Well, since you have not sufficient courage to break the hated chain, poor wretch, you must obey."

He picked up his hat and rushed out.

When we are carried away by a great passion it is some consolation to our self-love to look down from the height of pride upon our weakness. "I certainly am weak," he said to himself; "but what if I wish to be so?"

As he walked slowly up the footpath which led to the garden gate, he could see in the distance a white face standing out against the dark background of trees. She beckoned to him with her handkerchief. His heart beat violently, and his knees trembled under him; he could not speak, and he had become so nervous that he feared lest the Countess should read his ill-humour.

He took the hand she held out to him, and kissed her brow, because she threw herself into his arms. He followed her into her sitting-room

in silence, though scarce able to suppress his bursting sighs.

A single candle lighted the Countess's room. They sat down, and Saint-Clair noticed his friend's coiffure; a single rose was in her hair. He had given her, the previous evening, a beautiful English engraving of Leslie's "Duchess of Portland" (whose hair was dressed in the same fashion), and Saint-Clair had merely remarked to the Countess, "I like that single rose better than all your elaborate coiffures." He did not like jewels, and inclined to the opinion of a noble lord who once remarked coarsely, "The devil has nothing left to teach women who overdress themselves and coil their hair fantastically." The night before, while playing with the Countess's pearl necklace (he always would have something between his hands when talking), Saint-Clair had said, "You are too pretty, Mathilde, to wear jewels; they are only meant to hide defects." To-night the Countess had stripped herself of rings, necklaces, earrings and bracelets, for she stored up his most trivial remarks. He noticed, above everything else in a woman's toilet, the shoes she wore; and, like many other men, he was quite mad on this point. A heavy shower had fallen at sunset, and the grass was still very wet; in spite of this the

Countess walked on the damp lawn in silk stockings and black satin slippers. . . . Suppose she were to take cold?

"She loves me," said Saint-Clair to himself.

He sighed at his folly, but smiled at Mathilde in spite of himself, tossed between his sorry mood and the gratification of seeing a pretty woman, who had sought, by those trifles which have such priceless value in the eyes of lovers, to please him.

The Countess was radiant with love, playfully mischievous and bewitchingly charming. She took something from a Japanese lacquered box and held it out to him in her little firmly closed hand.

"I broke your watch the other night," she said; "here it is, mended."

She handed the watch to him and looked at him tenderly, and yet mischievously, biting her lower lip as though to prevent herself from laughing. Oh, what beautiful white teeth she had! and how they gleamed against the ruby red of her lips! (A man looks exceedingly foolish when he is being teased by a pretty woman, and replies coldly.)

Saint-Clair thanked her, took the watch and was about to put it in his pocket.

"Look at it and open it," she continued.

" See if it is mended all right. You, who are so learned, you, who have been to the Polytechnic School, ought to be able to tell that."

" Oh, I didn't learn much there," said Saint-Clair.

He opened the case in an absent-minded way, and what was his surprise to find a miniature portrait of Madam de Coursy painted on the interior of the case? How could he sulk any longer? His brow cleared; he thought no longer of Massigny; he only remembered that he was by the side of a beautiful woman, and that this woman loved him.

. . . . .

" The lark, that harbinger of dawn," began to sing, and long bands of pale light stretched across the eastern clouds. At such an hour did Romeo say farewell to Juliet, and it is the classic hour when all lovers should part.

Saint-Clair stood before a mantelpiece, the key of the garden gate in his hand, his eyes intently fixed on the Etruscan vase, of which we have already spoken. In the depths of his soul he still bore it a grudge, although he was in a much better humour. The simple explanation occurred to his mind that Thémines might have lied about it. While the Countess was wrapping a shawl round her head in order to go to the gar-

den gate with him he began to tap the detested vase with the key, at first gently, then gradually increasing the force of his blows until it seemed as though he would soon smash it to atoms.

"Oh, do be careful!" Mathilde exclaimed. "You will break my beautiful Etruscan vase!"

She snatched the key out of his hands.

Saint-Clair was very angry, but he resigned himself and turned his back on the chimney-piece to avoid temptation. Opening his watch, he began to examine the portrait that had just been given him.

"Who painted it?" he asked.

"Monsieur R——, and it was Massigny who introduced him to my notice. (After Massigny had been in Rome he discovered that he had exquisite taste in art, and constituted himself the Macænas of all young painters.) I really think the portrait is like me, though it is a little too flattering."

Saint-Clair had a burning desire to fling the watch against the wall, to break it beyond all hope of mending. He controlled himself, however, and put the watch in his pocket. Then he noticed that it was daylight, and, entreating Mathilde not to come out with him, he left the house and crossed the garden with rapid strides, and was soon alone in the country.

"Massigny! Massigny!" he burst forth with concentrated rage. "Can I never escape him? . . . No doubt the artist who painted this portrait painted another for Massigny. . . . What a fool I am to imagine for a moment that I am loved with a love equal to my own! . . . just because she put aside her jewels and wore a rose in her hair! . . . Jewels! why, she has a chest full. . . . Massigny, who thought of little else save a woman's toilet, was a lover of jewellery! . . . Yes, she has a gracious nature, it must be granted; she knows how to gratify the tastes of her lovers. Damn it! I would rather a hundred times that she were a courtesan and gave herself for money. Just because she was my mistress and unpaid I thought she loved me indeed."

Soon another still more unhappy idea presented itself. In a few weeks' time the Countess would be out of mourning, and Saint-Clair had promised to marry her as soon as her year of widowhood was over. He had promised. Promised? No. He had never spoken of it, but such had been his intention and the Countess had understood it so. But for him this was as good as an oath. Last night he would have given a throne to hasten the time for acknowledging his love publicly; now the very thought of marrying

the former mistress of Massigny filled him with loathing.

"Nevertheless, I owe it to her to marry her," he said to himself, "and it shall be done. No doubt she thinks, poor woman, I heard all about her former *liaison;* it seems to have been generally known. Besides, she did not then know me. . . . She can not understand me; she thinks that I am only such another lover as Massigny."

Then he said to himself, and not without a certain pride—

"For three months she has made me the happiest man living; such happiness is worth the sacrifice of my life."

He did not go to bed, but rode about among the woods the whole of the morning. In one of the pathways of the woods of Verrières he saw a man mounted on a fine English horse, who called him immediately by his name while he was still far off. It was Alphonse de Thémines. To a man in Saint-Clair's state of mind solitude is particularly desirable, and this encounter with Thémines changed his bad humour into a furious temper. Thémines did not notice his mood, or perhaps took a wicked pleasure in thwarting it. He talked and laughed and joked without noticing that he did not receive any response.

Saint-Clair soon tried to turn his horse aside into a narrow track, hoping the bore would not follow him; but it was of no use, bores do not leave their prey so easily. Thémines pulled the bridle in the same direction, increased his horse's pace to keep by Saint-Clair's side and complacently continued the conversation.

I have said that the path was a narrow one. The two horses could hardly walk abreast. It was not, therefore, to be wondered at that even so good a horseman as Thémines should graze against Saint-Clair's foot as he walked along with him. This put the finishing touch to his anger, and he could not contain himself any longer. He rose in his stirrups and struck Thémines' horse sharply across the nose with his whip.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Auguste?" cried Thémines. "Why do you strike my horse?"

"Why do you pursue me?" roared Saint-Clair.

"Have you lost your senses, Saint-Clair? You forget to whom you are talking."

"I know quite well that I am talking to a puppy."

"Saint-Clair! . . . . you must be mad, I think. . . . Listen to me. To-morrow you

will either apologise to me, or you will account for your insolent conduct."

"To-morrow, then, sir——"

Thémines stopped his horse; Saint-Clair pushed his on, and very soon disappeared among the trees.

He was calmer now. He was silly enough to believe in presentiments. He felt sure he would be killed on the morrow, and that would be a suitable ending to his condition. Only one more day of anxieties and torments to endure. He went home and sent a note by his servant to Colonel Beaujeu. He wrote several letters, after which he dined with a good appetite, and was promptly at the little garden gate by 8.30.

. . . . .

"What is the matter with you to-day, Auguste?" said the Countess. "You are unusually lively, and yet your gaiety does not move me to laugh. Last night you were just a trifle dull, and I was the gay one! We have changed parts to-day. I have a racking headache."

"Dear one, I admit it. Yes, I was very tedious yesterday, but to-day I have been out, I took exercise, and I feel quite excited."

"On the other hand, I overslept myself this morning, and rose late. I had bad dreams."

"Ah! dreams? Do you believe in dreams?"

"What nonsense!"

"I believe in them. I am sure that you had a dream which foretold some tragic event."

"Good heavens! I never remember my dreams. Once I recollect . . . that I saw Massigny in my dream; so, you see, it was not very entertaining."

"Massigny! But I should have thought you would have been pleased at seeing him again!"

"Poor Massigny!"

"Why 'poor Massigny'?"

"Please tell me, Auguste, what is wrong with you to-night. Your smile is perfectly diabolic, and you seem to be making game of yourself."

"Ah! now you are treating me as badly as your old dowager friends treat me."

"Yes, Auguste, you wear the same expression to-day that you put on before people whom you do not like."

"That is unpardonable in me. Come, give me your hand."

He kissed her hand with ironical gallantry, and they gazed at each other studiously for a minute. Saint-Clair was the first to drop his eyes.

"How difficult it is," he exclaimed, "to live

in this world without being thought ill of! One ought really never to talk of anything but the weather and hunting, or eagerly to discuss with your old friends the reports of their benevolent societies."

He picked up a paper from the table near him.

"Come, here is your lace-cleaner's bill. Let us discuss that, sweetheart; then you can not say I am ill-tempered."

"Really, Auguste, you amaze me. . . ."

"This handwriting puts me in mind of a letter I found this morning. I must explain that I have fits of untidiness occasionally, and I was arranging my papers. Well, then, I found a love-letter from a dressmaker with whom I fell in love at sixteen. She had a trick of writing each word most fantastically, and her style was equal to her writing. Well, I was foolish enough then to be vexed that my mistress could not write as well as Madame de Sévigné, and I left her abruptly. In reading over this letter to-day I see that this dressmaker really did love me."

"Really! a woman whom you kept?"

"In fine style on fifty francs a month. But I could not afford more, as my guardian only allowed me a little money at a time, for he said

that youths who had money ruined themselves and others."

"What became of this woman?"

"How should I know? . . . Probably she died in a hospital."

"Auguste, . . . if that were true you would not speak so flippantly."

"Well, then, to tell you the truth, she is married to a respectable man, and when I came of age I gave her a small dowry."

"How good of you! . . . But why do you try to make yourself out so evil?"

"Oh, I am good enough. . . . The more I think of it the more I persuade myself that this woman really did care for me. . . . But on the other hand, it is difficult to discern true feeling under such a ridiculous expression of it."

"You ought to have shown me your letter. I should not have been jealous. . . . We women have finer tact than you, and we can tell at a glance, from the style of a letter, whether the writer is sincere, or feigning a passion he does not really feel."

"But what a number of times you have allowed yourself to be taken in by fools and rogues!"

As he spoke he looked at the Etruscan vase

with a threatening glance, to which his voice responded, but Mathilde went on without noticing anything.

"Come, now, all you men wish to pose as Don Juans. You fancy you are making dupes when often you have encountered only Doña Juana, who is much more cunning than yourselves."

"I perceive that with your superior wit you ladies scent out rakes in every place. I doubt not also that our friend Massigny, who was both a stupid and a coxcomb, became, when dead, spotless and a martyr."

"Massigny? He was not a fool; then too there are silly women to be found. I must tell you a story about Massigny. But surely have I not told it you already?"

"Never," replied Saint-Clair tremblingly.

"Massigny fell in love with me after his return from Italy. My husband knew him and introduced him to me as a man of taste and culture. Those two were just made for each other. Massigny was most attentive to me from the first; he gave me some water-colour sketches which he had bought from Schroth, as his own paintings, and talked of music and art in the most divertingly superior manner. One day he sent me an incredibly ridiculous letter. He said,

among other things, that I was the best woman in Paris; therefore he wished to be my lover. I showed the letter to my cousin Julie. We were then both very silly, and we resolved to play him a trick. One evening we had several visitors, among them being Massigny. My cousin said to me, 'I am going to read you a declaration of love which I received this morning.' She took the letter and read it amidst peals of laughter. . . . Poor Massigny! . . . "

Saint-Clair fell on his knees uttering a cry of joy. He seized the Countess's hand and covered it with tears and kisses. Mathilde was surprised beyond measure, and thought at first he had gone mad. Saint-Clair could only murmur, "Forgive me! forgive me!" When he rose to his feet he was radiant; he was happier than on the day when Mathilde had said to him for the first time, "I love you."

"I am the guiltiest and most stupid of men," he cried; "for two days I have misjudged you . . . and never given you a chance to clear yourself. . . ."

"You suspected me? . . . And of what?"

"Oh! idiot that I was! . . . they told me you had loved Massigny, and——"

"Massigny!" and she began to laugh; then

soon quickly growing more earnest, "Auguste," she said, "how could you be so foolish as to harbour such suspicions, and so hypocritical as to hide them from me?"

Her eyes filled with tears.

"I implore you to forgive me."

"Of course I forgive you, beloved . . . but let me first swear. . . ."

"Oh! I believe you, I believe you; do not say any more about it."

"But in Heaven's name what put such an improbable notion in your head?"

"Nothing, nothing in the world except my accursed temper . . . and . . . would you believe it? that Etruscan vase which I knew Massigny had given you."

The Countess clasped her hands together in amazement, and then she burst into shouts of laughter.

"My Etruscan vase! my Etruscan vase!"

Saint-Clair was obliged to join in the laughter himself, although great tears rolled down his cheeks. He seized Mathilde in his arms. "I will not let you go," he said, "until you pardon me."

"Yes, I forgive you, though you are so foolish," she replied, kissing him tenderly. "You make me very happy to-day; it is the first

time I have seen you shed tears, and I thought that you could not weep."

Then she struggled from his embrace, and, snatching the Etruscan vase, broke it into a thousand pieces on the floor. It was a valuable and unique work, painted in three colours, and represented the fight between a Lapithe and a Centaur.

For several hours Saint-Clair was the happiest and the most ashamed of men.

. . . . .

"Well," said Roquantin to Colonel Beaujeu, when he met him in the evening at Tortoni's, "is this news true?"

"Too true, my friend," answered the Colonel sadly.

"Tell me, how did it come about?"

"Oh! just as it should. Saint-Clair began by telling me he was in the wrong, but that he wished to draw Thémines' fire before begging his pardon. I could do no other than accede. Thémines wished to draw lots who should fire first. Saint-Clair insisted that Thémines should. Thémines fired; and I saw Saint-Clair turn round once and then fell stone dead. I have often remarked, in the case of soldiers when they have been shot, this strange turning round which precedes death."

Then she struggled from his embrace, and, snatching the Etruscan vase, broke it into a thousand pieces on the floor.

Etched by Lalauze from a painting by Ed. de Beaumont.

time I have seen you shed tears, and I thought I could not weep."

Then she struggled from his embrace, and, snatching the Etruscan vase, broke it into a thousand pieces on the floor. It was a valuable and unique work, painted in three colours, and represented the fight between a Lapith and a Centaur.

For several hours Saint-Clair was the happiest and the most ashamed of men.

. . . . . .

"Well," said Roquantin to Colonel Beaujeu, when he met him in the evening at Tortoni's, "is this news true?"

"Yes, my friend," answered the Colonel sadly.

"Then tell me how it came about?"

"Oh! just as I should. Saint-Clair began by telling me I was in the wrong, but that he wished to draw Themines' fire before begging his pardon. I could do no other than accede. Themines wished to draw lots who should fire first. Saint-Clair insisted that Themines should fire first; and I saw Saint-Clair turn round twice and then fall. They have often remarked, in the case of duels, how much like death."

Ed. de Beaumont pinx. Copyright 1875 by Frank Leslie. Lalauze sc

"How very extraordinary!" said Roquantin. "But Thémines, what did he do?"

"Oh, what is usual on these occasions: he threw his pistol on the ground remorsefully, with such force that he broke the hammer. It was an English pistol of Manton's. I don't believe there is a gunmaker in Paris who could make such another."

. . . . .

The Countess shut herself up in her country house for three whole years without seeing anyone; winter and summer, there she lived, hardly going out of her room. She was waited upon by a mulatto woman who knew of the attachment between Saint-Clair and herself. She scarcely spoke a word to her day after day. At the end of three years her cousin Julie returned from a long voyage. She forced her way into the house and found poor Mathilde thin and pale, the very ghost of the beautiful and fascinating woman she had left behind. By degrees she persuaded her to come out of her solitude, and took her to Hyères. The Countess languished there for three or four months, and then died of consumption brought on by her grief—so said Dr. M——, who attended her.

1830.

THE CONSPIRATORS

Les Mécontents

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE COUNT DES TOURNELLES.

THE COUNTESS DES TOURNELLES.

EDOUARD NANGIS—cousin of the Countess, and Lieutenant in the Light-Horse.

THE BARON DE MACHICOULIS.

THE COUNT DE FIERDONJON.

THE MARQUIS DE MALESPINE.

THE CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY.

BERTRAND—called SANS-PEUR—formerly an officer in the army of La Vendée.

JULIETTE—femme de chambre of the COUNTESS DES TOURNELLES.

FRANÇOIS—confidential servant of the COUNT DES TOURNELLES.

A GENDARME.

The scene is laid in the Château des Tournelles, in a Department bordering on La Vendée.

THE CONSPIRATORS

A dining-room: in the middle a table covered with a green cloth—upon it ink-wells, pens, etc.

Scene I

François, Juliette (*they are arranging chairs around the table*).

Francois. I tell you, Juliette, it is just like the Revolution. They are going to try to copy the Committee of Public Safety. The Committeee of Public Safety had a green table-cloth exactly like this.

Juliette. Nonsense! You don't know what you are talking about. Madame loathes the Revolution. *I* think that they are going to write "*bouts-rimés*" just as they did last year.

François. What is "bouts-rimés"?

Juliette. It's a game, but you have to be clever to play it. Each one in the party writes something on a sheet of paper and then there's one person who begins to laugh, and then they all laugh like mad. But here comes Madame! Hurry away, and get the arm-chair she told you about.

Scene II

François, Juliette, *the* Countess des Tournelles.

The Countess. Juliette, fetch me the bronze bell from my boudoir.

Juliette. The bell? But if you wished to call me I should hear the dining-room bell much better—see Madame—this bell.

The Countess. I asked you to fetch the bell from my boudoir, and I did not say it was to call you. Go and get it now.

Juliette. I did not mean any harm, Madame—I'll go at once. (*Aside*) What can all these preparations mean?

(*Exit* Juliette, François *enters carrying an arm-chair.*)

The Countess. François, put that chair at the middle of the table. No, stupid! don't put it *on* the table but beside it. *Good!* That will do. That is all I need just now. (Exit François.) Really this dining-room looks as if it had been especially planned for our meeting. After all it *is* better than the underground chamber of the old tower, which would have been more romantic but is too damp; and we might have caught pneu-

monia there. Now this bell will be most effective. Besides it may prove useful, for if the discussion becomes very stormy the President would need it. How nice that would be.

JULIETTE (*returns with bell*). Here it is, Madame—where shall I put it?

The COUNTESS. Put it on the table near the big arm-chair. Juliette, yesterday you asked permission to go to see your sister. You may go out to-day. I shall not need you.

JULIETTE. Oh, but my sister is not expecting me to-day, Madame! Besides, you have given the coachman leave to go out to-day, and Master has told his valet that *he* may go too, so if by chance you were to have any callers there would be no one to open the door.

The COUNTESS (*aside*). I wonder if she wishes to stay to spy on our movements? (*Aloud*) I am not expecting anyone. But for that matter, Juliette, you may do as you please. In any case you must take the book which is on my desk to Madame de Saint-Denise, that is quite near your sister's—less than a mile and a half from here. Tell her, please, that I thank her very much for the book, and then tell her——

JULIETTE. Yes, Madame?

The COUNTESS. That—the—meeting——

JULIETTE. The meeting?

The COUNTESS. The one that she knows about. Wait—I'll just write her a little note. You are really so very forgetful. Oh, by the way, Juliette, go and get me one of the porcelain vases from my mantel-piece. (JULIETTE *goes out.*) I was forgetting all about the urn for the ballots—the most important thing of all. (*She writes*) "At last it has been arranged that our friends are to meet here to-night, and we are to organise the secret society which"—wait a bit; perhaps I am making it too explicit. I must be more cautious. (*She tears up the note which she has begun and writes again*) "Our friends are coming to see me to-day; we"—ah! now I have an excellent idea! "We shall endeavour to restore to its once honoured position that fashion of bygone days, which you love as deeply as I. P.S. Keep Juliette as long as you can"—a word to the wise——(*Enter* JULIETTE.) Well, why those *two* vases? I asked you for only one.

JULIETTE. It was to have them match, Madame.

The COUNTESS. Have them match! Take this one away. Set the other one beside the bell. Here, take this letter and give it with the book to Madame de Saint-Denise.——Ah!—on the way back go to Pitou, the book-seller, and ask

him for " The Prince of Machiavelli " : be sure to remember: " The Prince of Machiavelli."

JULIETTE. The Prince of Machiavelli. I can tell you, Madame, if it is a new novel M. Pitou will probably not have it in stock yet.

The COUNTESS. *That* is to be found in every library. Wait, I'll write the title: " The Prince of Machiavelli." The best translation. (JULIETTE *goes out.*) There! I'm rid of her at last. I haven't any misgivings about François. How long the hour is in coming round! I am simply beside myself with joy. It seems to me that I am just in my element. What a delightful occupation conspiring is!

(*Enter the* COUNT DES TOURNELLES.)

SCENE III

The COUNTESS, *the* COUNT.

The COUNTESS. Well, Monsieur des Tournelles, the hour draws near. Is your terror subsiding?

The COUNT. My terror? Say rather my uneasiness; and really I have some ground for it. The idea of conspiring at this present moment! —for to put it plainly we *are* conspiring. I don't know if you realise what danger there is in con-

spiring in our days, surrounded by police as suspicious as those of the Emperor. Do you know that they are outrageously brutal? and if we were discovered we should be exceedingly lucky if no worse a fate befell us than to spend the rest of our lives in the Château of Ham, or at Vincennes.

The COUNTESS. But think of the glory that will be ours if we succeed.

The COUNT. It's a high-sounding word—that's all! Moreover, since we are somewhat involved—very slightly involved—in this affair, let us try to direct it with great prudence. Since you wish to conspire—good and well, let us conspire, but do not let us compromise ourselves. And, see here, do you wish to know exactly what I think about the whole matter? I am afraid that you may really harm our cause by your very zeal, which often runs to rashness. For instance, the other day, at the Prefect's, why did you need to say before at least twenty persons, that you did not approve of the war with Spain, and that you would be exceedingly sorry if your cousin were sent there?

The COUNTESS. Well, and isn't it an abominable war—begun by most odious treason? and who are the victims of this black perfidy? Princes whom we should love and respect since

they belong to the august family which once governed us, and which by the grace of God, we shall once more see upon the throne.

The COUNT. Please don't speak so loudly! François might hear us in the hall. Yes, I agree with you it *is* an abominable war, but at the Prefect's! and he noticed it, too, for after dinner his wife passed coffee to everyone but me.

The COUNTESS. What a splendid revenge, and quite worthy of the horrid creature who holds herself as proudly in her carriage as if everyone did not know that her father was in the lace-trade. But patience! In a little while we shall see grovelling in the dust, all these mushrooms that the Revolution has caused to spring up upon the ruins of the throne.

The COUNT. And we'll restore legal order, How impatient I am to see it once more in force. Under these new laws of the country there is no way of sending all those miserable poachers to the penitentiary; and they don't leave us a single partridge to shoot after the first of October.

The COUNTESS. And just think of the glorious privileges which our ancestors enjoyed. And, isn't it an injustice that fairly cries out for vengeance, that the Count des Tournelles is not governor of his province. He, whose ancestors had armed retainers and who could levy toll from

each person who crossed over that wretched little bridge a league from here.

The COUNT. I have documents to prove it.

The COUNTESS. And, moreover, isn't it a burning shame that when you, Monsieur des Tournelles, in a moment of desperation asked to be appointed Chamberlain to the Usurper, your request was not granted? Should not this outrage make you forget all the considerations which prudence might have suggested?

The COUNT. I did forget myself for a moment, it is true—that man does dazzle one so—But for Heaven's sake don't mention my request to the gentlemen who are coming to-day.

The COUNTESS. Don't worry about *that*. I speak about it only to show you in what a state of confusion public affairs really are, and to prove to you that the moment has come when every Frenchman should arise and shake off this humiliating yoke.

The COUNT. You are right. The whole French nation should unite to shake off this yoke. Parbleu! if the whole French nation were to rise in a body against the Usurper I should not be the last to join her ranks. But the deuce take it all, there are only five or six of us to conspire against a man who is all powerful. Our undertaking is certainly hazardous. All last

night I thought about it, and I could not close an eye. The truth is I had been reading "The Conspiracies" of Saint-Réal and it had upset me a good deal. They were always discovered. I have a presentiment that——

The COUNTESS. Spare me, I do beg of you, your fears and your presentiments, Monsieur. You are a man and a gentleman, you have been a soldier, and you are afraid of everything. I, who am only a woman, I look with a calm eye upon all the consequences which may be entailed by the enterprise upon which I have embarked. Let them discover our conspiracy—let them arrest me—let them drag me away to prison! I shall take a grim pleasure in appearing before my judges and pleading my cause. "Yes, I did conspire," I will tell them. "I did conspire to overthrow your Emperor, and if it is a crime to have tried to free one's country from a tyrant then am I guilty!" I shall dress very simply for the occasion, all in black, with my hair parted, no jewels. On second thought, I would have a gold cross. I shall speak, and I shall make an impression, I assure you. A woman who is young and distinguished looking—accused of conspiracy. Every heart will sympathise with her,—and if I must walk to the scaffold——

The COUNT. Good Heavens! To hear you

talk one might fear that you would go and give yourself up to the police, that you might have the pleasure of posing as the heroine of a novel. Mélanie, Mélanie, these novels that you are always reading will completely turn your head, and that I can confidently predict.

The Countess. If these works which I read inspire me with such noble and lofty sentiments, it seems to me, sir, that you might do well to read them a little oftener. But time is passing, the appointed hour approaches, and you are not dressed yet. It would be a good idea too, if you should read over once more, by yourself my—our speech before reading it to our friends. Be particularly careful to read with special emphasis—the end—the peroration.

The Count. The peroration! Do you know I think it is a little too uncompromising; and then there are some deucedly long sentences—— it will be the very dickens to take breath at the right point.

The Countess. Do please hurry, Monsieur des Tournelles; and above all things try to look more serene. Life is a green cloth, on which there is no sport at all, unless we are willing to play for high stakes.

The Count. Ah, Napoleon, if you knew to what dangers you were exposing yourself, you

would not have refused me the Chamberlain's Key.

The COUNTESS. Do please go quickly. I hear someone coming into the court-yard on horseback.

The COUNT (*looking out of the window*). Good Heavens! a soldier—an officer! We are lost! All is discovered. The satellites of the Emperor are coming to arrest us!

The COUNTESS. Have some presence of mind, my dear—Calm yourself! (*She sits down, takes a pen and writes, speaking at the same time*) You say then that we must invite to this ball, Monsieur le Préfet, the Chief of Police, the——

SCENE IV

EDOUARD DE NANGIS, *the* COUNT *and* COUNTESS.

EDOUARD. How are you, Cousin Mélanie! Don't you know me?

The COUNTESS. EDOUARD!

EDOUARD. Come give me a kiss, if you are not afraid of my mustaches. The deuce take it all, if you aren't stunning. You have grown even prettier, you have become——

The COUNT. Monsieur de Nangis: it gives me great pleasure——

EDOUARD. Monsieur de Nangis? To the deuce with your Monsieur de Nangis. Just call me plain Cousin Edouard. My word, it is a long while since I last saw you. You've grown older looking.

The COUNTESS. Do you think so?

EDOUARD. But you, Cousin Mélanie, when I left for Germany you were slight as a willow. While now, thunder and lightning, your waist is slim enough, but otherwise——Diantre! it is evident that you have good air here, and live well too!

The COUNTESS (*aside*). He is odd with his brusque ways—but he is a charming fellow all the same.

The COUNT (*in a whisper*). How are we going to get rid of him?

EDOUARD. Oh, by the way, I have a month's leave. I am going to spend it with you; it is so deuced good to see your own people, and I was fairly champing at the bit to get off to see you. We'll have perfect larks, won't we? hunting, fishing, and a roaring good time. I am going to raise the very dickens: and you won't be behind me. I used to know you in the old days. I'll tell your wife some of the things I know about you, you sly old dog.

The COUNT. If I told her some of the things I know about *you,* you scamp!

EDOUARD. I give you leave. But, see here, I have brought two pointers with me, two thoroughbred English spaniels. They came from Germany. They belonged to a Prince, whose estate we turned upside down. Just wait, and you will see. Ah,—and the day after to-morrow my horses are coming. I have an Arabian mare that I should like my cousin to try. You have boars around here, haven't you? I have a boarhound too. He is coming from Bohemia. Oh! what a dog! But, Cousin Mélanie, you'll have to shut up your cats, otherwise he would break their backs at a single snap. We are going to have a time of it. You have neighbours, haven't you? The more the merrier. In the morning we'll go hunting—we'll drink Cousin Mélanie's champagne; in the evening we'll have music, we'll sing duets; I have a regular virtuoso voice now—la, la, la, la,—we'll dance, I'll make love to Cousin Mélanie, if her husband isn't jealous; you aren't jealous, old fellow, are you? *Sacrement,* as the Germans say, we might as well enjoy life.

The COUNT (*in a whisper to the* COUNTESS). Do try to get him out of the way.

The COUNTESS (*the same*). I have designs upon him.

EDOUARD. By the way, old chap, what is your dinner hour? Do you know I'm hungry as a hunter! I could never wait till dinner time.

The COUNT. I'll have something sent up to your room.

EDOUARD. No, no, let me have it here, and we'll have a good chat together. I'll just have a snack of anything here. My word, in barracks I learned to eat and talk at the same time, without losing a moment from my food. (*He calls*) I say there, come here—What are your servants' names? I say there!

The COUNTESS (*after having rung, to* FRANÇOIS, *who enters*). Bring in the game pie. What wine will you have?

EDOUARD. Claret—But, I say, have you still that Pomard you said you were keeping for when I should come back from Germany?

The COUNTESS. You have a good memory—Bring in a bottle of Pomard—You'll hurry up, won't you, Edouard. We are going to need the table in a few minutes. Monsieur des Tournelles, you must go and dress. Edouard will excuse you.

EDOUARD. Well now, I should say that it *would* be rather silly to stand on ceremony with me. I'll not take a minute to finish. I'll just gobble and run.

The COUNT (*in a whisper to the* COUNTESS). How are you going to manage?

The COUNTESS. Just leave it to me.

The COUNT (*the same*). Perhaps the best plan would be to postpone the whole affair until after he leaves.

The COUNTESS. Do please go on as I say. I'll be responsible for him.

(*The* COUNT *retires.*)

SCENE V

EDOUARD, *the* COUNTESS.

EDOUARD. What the dickens have you two to talk about? Have you some secrets you wish to keep from me, or am I in the way?

The COUNTESS. Very far from it. We are delighted to see you, Edouard, and a little later I will tell you what M. des Tournelles was saying. You have your same healthy appetite, I see.

EDOUARD. In camp I learned to eat quickly; in our barracks in Germany I learned to stay a long while at table. So now I eat long and quickly. And don't you know I covered twelve leagues this morning on a ramshackle nag, just

to see you a little sooner—But I am forgetting that it isn't polite to have a hearty appetite when one is with a pretty woman. (*He pushes away the pie, and heaves a sigh.*) There! I've finished.

The COUNTESS. You don't mean to say that you are going to stand on ceremony with me. Don't stop. Only be careful not to spoil your appetite for dinner. (*She fills his glass.*) How do you like this wine?

EDOUARD. Most delicious—Especially when you are pouring it for me.

The COUNTESS. Was it in the army that you learned all these pretty speeches?

EDOUARD. Here, Cousin Mélanie, will you fill my glass again, please? In the army, you see, we learn to tell the plain truth without any frills, and, speaking of the truth, you are a charmingly beautiful woman. You can take my word for it, for it's true. You are ten times, twenty times prettier than you were four years ago, at the time of your marriage, when I was a raw recruit, head over heels in love with you and afraid to tell you so!

The COUNTESS. What a queer fellow you are!

EDOUARD. Yes, my word, I am queer—more so than you think—and it lies with you to make

me give an exhibition of how queer I can be when I set about it. (*He gets up.*)

The Countess. I can easily believe it. But do sit down and let us have a really serious talk. (*She fills up his glass.*) Tell me about your companions and your love affairs, for the two go hand in hand. I see that you have only one épaulette just as you had when you went away. I thought I should see you come back a colonel at least.

Edouard. Ah, well, we can't have everything we wish for, worse luck. I'm lieutenant still, plain lieutenant. The cross has fairly slipped between my fingers. But patience a bit longer. If a bullet doesn't cut me off——

The Countess. Under the government which we now have there is no chance at all for men of good family. Everything goes to the low-born.

Edouard. Oh, well! I have had bad luck, too. In this wretched Light-Horse no one dies off. I believe the rascals are invulnerable. If I had only been able to take to mathematics, I should have gone into the light artillery. Promotion is rapid I tell you in that regiment. Why, if you'll believe it the battery of artillery that enlisted when we did, had to be renewed three times during the last year. One of my

friends who was lieutenant last year is going to be promoted major, if he doesn't die of a shot he got in the stomach.

The Countess. If it had not been for the Revolution, Edouard, you with your birth would have been colonel at this very moment.

Edouard. Yes, in those days it wasn't any such great luck to be colonel—wear a cocked hat—carry your sword level, and mount guard at the gate of Mme. de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XIV—great sport *that* was! A glorious career!

The Countess. Really, Edouard, you are terribly misinformed, or your mind has been horribly perverted. If the Revolution had not upset everything you would have been one of the most fashionable gentlemen of your day. You would be an ornament of the court, you would be marquis.

Edouard. Please, Cousin Mélanie, don't speak about being marquis. In the regiment when they wish to put me into a fine rage they call me "Monsieur le Marquis." It's so perfectly ridiculous to be a marquis. Le Marquis de Marcarille! Jump, Marquis! Parbleu, I got a good sword cut from Simoneau, a lieutenant of the 10th regiment, and gave him another just as good because he called me Marquis. So, you

see, as I can not give you a sword cut, if you call me Marquis, I shall kiss you.

The Countess. What a corrupter this Bonaparte is! To think that a young man belonging to a noble family could become the minion of a Corsican. So, you are enthusiastic about your Emperor? He is your idol, your divinity, he is everything to you. You adore him?

Edouard. My word, I may like him, but I am not wild about him; my colonel asked him to give me the cross; and he answered, looking me over from head to foot as if I were a horse on sale, "He is too young." He doesn't mince matters, I tell you.

The Countess. Because he was too young! What odious injustice!

Edouard. As far as that goes you are quite right. At our last engagement we made a charge together with the lancers of the Guard. They are the Emperor's little pet lambs. Thirty of them were knocked out, we lost just as many, but the general in command, wishing to curry favour with Napoleon, said to him "Your lancers covered themselves with glory, the enemy's hussars were annihilated, but your brave lancers suffered a heavy loss; the Light-Horse of the 10th suffered a slight loss";—so the crosses fell

to the lancers, and we got blows, mud, poor quarters and the devil to pay!

The COUNTESS (*filling his glass*). Wasn't I just saying that he was the most unjust man in the world! Refuse you the cross. You come of too noble stock to fail to resent most violently such an insult.

EDOUARD. But it is not enough, just to resent it.

The COUNTESS. Certainly not, you must avenge it.

EDOUARD. Yes! the Emperor would be well paid if I sent in my resignation. And then retire in time of war! It can't be done. Our regiment is going to Spain soon.

The COUNTESS. To Spain! You are going to take part in that frightful, that criminal war? Have you so soon forgotten the treachery of Bayonne?

EDOUARD. Bah! Bah! These curs of Spaniards will be only too glad if we are willing to rid them of their monks.

The COUNTESS. Oh, Edouard! How you distress me! How sad it is to see you holding such political views.

EDOUARD. *I?* The deuce take it if I have anything to do with politics!

The COUNTESS. I, who am scarcely older

than you, have kept alive memories, which already have lost their power to awaken a response in your heart.

EDOUARD. What, Cousin Mélanie, can it be possible? Oh! I, too, I have not forgotten a certain time——If you only knew all I suffered at the time of your marriage!

The COUNTESS. Edouard, you don't understand me. I am referring to the days when your father and mine were counted among the firmest supports of the legitimate throne—of the days when men willingly lost their lives in defence of their King. Ah! If the gallant old Marquis de Nangis knew that his son was clamouring for the honour of serving a tyrant, a plebeian usurper, he would rise from the grave and reproach you for dishonouring your noble descent.

EDOUARD. Really, Cousin Mélanie, you are speaking about things of which I had never heard even the slightest hint. I thought that your husband wished to be Prefect, or Chamberlain or something of that sort. We soldiers, you know, we obey the Emperor because he *is* the Emperor. We are not obliged to know whether he is a usurper or not.

The COUNTESS. That is to say that you give up your human hearts to make slaves of your-

selves. You wish to see merely by the eyes, to hear merely by the ears.

EDOUARD. As a matter of fact he is a usurper, but he is recognised by everyone.

The COUNTESS. Except by all those noble hearts which will never recognise any sovereign other than the exiled princes.

EDOUARD. The children of Louis XVI? I thought that they died during the Revolution.

The COUNTESS. Alas! The barbarians: they let his son die in a dungeon—but his brothers are in exile—and a Nangis could forget them!

EDOUARD. Ma foi! the fact is that I have not been reading anything.

The COUNTESS. I will admit that I have been building great hopes on you. I felt sure that the factitious glory of the usurper could not lead you astray. I hoped that I should find you faithful to the cause of the unfortunate.

EDOUARD. But, Cousin Mélanie, I really look at it in the same light, but I don't quite see how one could set about——

The COUNTESS. Edouard, Edouard, your discretion is, I know, quite beyond your years. I will confide in you. Your political opinions are opposed to mine, it is true; but you are a man of the most sensitive honour and you will not betray me.

EDOUARD. Oh! Cousin Mélanie! but I repeat that I have no political opinions and if I adopt any, I shall adopt yours.

The COUNTESS. A small band of courageous men have laid a plan to free their country from a shameful yoke: my husband and I are going to work with this end in view. Perhaps by the help of God we may succeed in recalling to France our rightful princes—perhaps we may succumb—and——

EDOUARD. Oh! my word, you are forming a conspiracy. Malepeste! how you do go at things.

The COUNTESS. Yes, Edouard, a conspiracy. And never was there one more worthy of success. Thinking that you, too, were groaning under the tyranny of the Corsican, I wished to offer you an opportunity of sharing our glory, and our danger——

EDOUARD. What! you are plotting? seriously? no joke?

The COUNTESS. Yes, Edouard! And weak woman though I may be, I conceived the idea of this plot. Edouard, I have spoken to you very openly, from my heart. If you love your Emperor more than your family, you may reveal our plans, you may work our ruin: I shall have courage to meet my fate.

EDOUARD. Parbleu! what do you take me for? You are not thinking of what you are saying,—otherwise—my word if you are in, the deuce if I would not like to have a hand in it myself.

The COUNTESS. Can it be true?

EDOUARD. Why not? I see that it pleases you; and I would go through fire to please you.

The COUNTESS. You delightful lad!

EDOUARD. A conspiracy, that must be great fun, and conspiracies are my strong point. I was expelled from the lycée because I was at the head of a conspiracy to thrash one of our housemasters. That's why I am such an ignoramus now. They put me into a military school, then they put an épaulette on my shoulder, a sabre to my side, and then theory—forward—march.

The COUNTESS. I have not a doubt that he was some Jacobin who tried to take advantage of his authority to oppress some young gentleman.

EDOUARD. His name was Ragoulard.

The COUNTESS. Oh! what a Jacobin name: Come now, you are really one of us?

EDOUARD. Really now, I don't know whether it is the result of your good wine or the fatigue of the journey; or of your lovely eyes (which is the most probable explanation), but I feel myself

on the point of saying——I can't put two and two together, on my honour you have bewitched me!

The Countess. Say, rather, Edouard, that I have awakened in your heart love for our king —a love which is as natural to members of our family as are courage and beauty.

Edouard. Well, then, it is decided. I give in. I shall love our king more than you, Cousin Mélanie,—on my honour the word just slipped out—but I have said what I think—I can't help it if it does make you angry.

The Countess. You are a strange lad, Edouard,—but you have good stuff in you and I am going to try to convert you.

Edouard. Ah! That is what the Bavarian Canoness said to me—the one— (*Aside*) What was I going to let out!

The Countess. We are expecting this very day these friends, these faithful ones of whom I was telling you. They are the most influential men in the whole countryside. The object of our meeting is to form an association, whose aim —yes, an association which will set about—let me see—just so——An association which will act in opposition to the imperial government, and which will seize the first opportunity of overthrowing it.

EDOUARD. It will take a good hard shove to overthrow this government.

The COUNTESS. Rest assured, we have most powerful men at our disposal. I'll explain that to you more fully during the visit which you are going to make us. Our business to-day is simply to form, to institute our secret society.

EDOUARD. Oh, say "our conspiracy," the word has a good sound.

The COUNTESS. Certain formalities will have to be gone through with, which you must see——

EDOUARD. All that I will need to know is that you are going to be there and I am sure to enjoy it.

The COUNTESS. You have given me your word, Edouard—I am counting on you. Come give me your hand. Edouard, Edouard, do stop —this is all very serious. You swear, do you, to be faithful to our glorious cause?

EDOUARD. Yes, I swear.

The COUNTESS. Well said, good fellow that you are. Repeat with me the cry with which your ancestors used to march to victory, "Vive le roi."

EDOUARD. Vive le roi!

The COUNTESS (*clapping her hands*). He is one of us! he is one of us! he is one of us!

Scene VI

Edouard, *the* Countess, *the* Count.

The Countess. Come, M. des Tournelles; come and embrace a new defender of the good cause.

Edouard (*aside*). Her husband! The deuce take him.

The Count (*kissing him*). I am delighted I am sure. (*Whispers to the* Countess) How the deuce did you manage it?

Edouard. Oh, by the way, Cousin Mélanie. You have not kissed the new defender of the good cause. You allow me, Cousin des Tournelles? (*He kisses the* Countess.)

The Countess (*in a whisper to* Edouard). Edouard, this is not right at all. You are very, very naughty.

Scene VII

The same, François, *the* Baron de Machicoulis, *the* Chevalier de Thimbray.

François (announces). M. le Baron de Machicoulis, le Chevalier de Thimbray.

Baron de Machicoulis. Fair Lady, here are two faithful knights who have come to swear allegiance at your feet. (*Noticing* Ed-

OUARD, *in a whisper*) A soldier? Who is the young man?

The COUNTESS. Baron de Machicoulis, I am delighted to see you looking so well. How do you do, Chevalier? how is Madame de Thimbray? Gentlemen, allow me to present my cousin the Marquis Edouard de Nangis, who is one of us. You will find in him all the courage of his ancestors, as well as their devotion to their rightful kings. Edouard, the Baron de Machicoulis, the Chevalier de Thimbray.

EDOUARD (*aside*). What a collection! They should really be put in show-cases.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. I should have known your cousin to be a Nangis from his great resemblance to the late Marquis de Nangis, his father, whom I knew very well when he was living. We served together once.

EDOUARD. Ah, you served. (*In a whisper to the* COUNTESS) Whom did he serve?

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. We were together at the siege of Gibraltar. We had it rather hot there, I tell you.

EDOUARD. I should say so. In Spain and Andalusia.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS (*in a whisper to the* COUNT). Is this young man to be relied upon? His manners smack of the regiment.

The Count. My wife says that she answers for him.

Edouard (*in a whisper to the* Countess). How would you like me to cut off his queue to make you a bell cord?

The Countess (*in a whisper*). Edouard, you simply have me on tenter hooks.

Chevalier de Thimbray. The others are late, if my watch is right.

The Count. Fierdonjon told me only yesterday that he would be the first one here.

Baron de Machicoulis (*to* Edouard). Monsieur le Marquis.

Edouard. My name is Monsieur de Nangis or Lieutenant, whichever you please. But no Marquis for me if you please!

The Countess. My cousin is really so very modest. (*In a whisper*) He has rather peculiar ideas about certain things.

Baron de Machicoulis. Monsieur de Nangis. Then you have just come from the army, I suppose?

Edouard. Only to-day.

Baron de Machicoulis. From Germany?

Edouard. From Germany.

Baron de Machicoulis. You probably saw the engagement at Wagram?

Edouard. A little.

The Countess. His horse was killed under him and he himself was wounded. Poor boy! What a terrible war it is.

Baron de Machicoulis. I am astonished that Prince Charles allowed himself to be beaten and he is nevertheless the best tactician in Europe. In the matter of strategy, however, all agree, do they not, in giving the palm to Field Marshal Kalkreuth?

Edouard. I have never heard of the duffer.

Baron de Machicoulis. And,—sir, may I venture to ask in what state you left the army? They say it is pervaded by a strong feeling of discontent.

Edouard. Yes, the common soldier is dissatisfied with the soldier's bread and beans; he would like the finest white bread and chicken.

Baron de Machicoulis. I have been told that the officers of the army——

Edouard. Look here, sir, I was ill, wounded. I was three months in the hospital before coming here,— (*In a whisper to the* Countess) Do deliver me from this fellow, with his mania for asking questions, or I'll insult him before everyone.

Scene VIII

François, *the* Count de Fierdonjon, *the* Marquis de Malespine.

François (*announces*). The Count de Fierdonjon, the Marquis de Malespine. (*He goes out.*)

Edouard (*in a whisper to the* Countess). Where in the dickens did you hunt up all these characters? There is some joke about it. Not one of them looks the least in the world like a conspirator. They have the kind of faces that would do to decorate screens. Just let me start them going.

The Countess (*in a whisper to* Edouard). Edouard, you are driving me to desperation. (*Aloud*) Monsieur de Fierdonjon, I am charmed to see you. (*In a whisper to* Edouard) If you keep this up— (*Aloud*) How do you do, Monsieur de Malespine? (*In a whisper to* Edouard) We are going to quarrel over this. These are all friends of mine. Promise me that you won't play any tricks. You are not going to, are you? —as you love me? (*Aloud*) Gentlemen, allow me to introduce you to my cousin.

Edouard. I will be good, since you forbid me to play any jokes.

The Count. Bertrand is the only one missing now.

Chevalier de Thimbray. It is most extraordinary that he is not here yet. The fellow is keeping us waiting.

The Marquis de Malespine. If only he doesn't break his word.

Count de Fierdonjon. Des Tournelles, do you know I think that you have displayed a decided lack of prudence in allowing this man to take part in our undertaking. Who can tell if he is to be relied upon? He is a peasant, plain and simple.

The Countess. He was major in the Royal Army.

Count de Fierdonjon. In the army of La Vendée, being short of gentlemen for officers, they were obliged to take clod-hoppers. That man does not appeal to me in the least. He shoots over my grounds without asking my permission and I can't get my keepers to testify against him.

The Count. Oh! that's an old habit of his. Monsieur de Kermorgant, from whom you bought the estate, upon your return from the emigration, used to allow him to shoot.

Chevalier de Thimbray. That was a good stroke of business that you did, Monsieur

de Fierdonjon. Oh! If I had only had the ready money in those days, I too would have bought some of the national property. It went for a mere song. Not that I in the least approve of those infamous spoliations, but when the mischief is done, let us try to see to it, that our enemies are not the ones to profit by it.

The Countess. Bertrand has a great deal of influence among the peasants. If there were need of a helping hand, he would be invaluable. Besides he has the highest testimonials from his superior officers.

Baron de Machicoulis. You would really think that the police were afraid of him, and that they did not dare to demand him to show his permit to carry arms.

Count de Fierdonjon. Come, gentlemen, this is really not seemly that we should wait upon this man. Let us begin.

The Countess. Why, here he is.

Scene IX

The same, Bertrand. (*He is carrying a double-barrelled gun and is followed by a big dog.*)

The Countess. How do you do, Monsieur Bertrand? Comrade Sans-Peur, as Monsieur de

Bonchamps used to call you. You have kept us waiting.

BERTRAND. Excuse me, Countess; the fact of the matter is that I happened upon a covey of partridges and they *did* give me a chase. However, here are two of them, and if you would accept them, they would be very nice in a salmi.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON (*aside*). I'll wager he killed them on my grounds.

The COUNTESS. Thank you, I'll accept them with very great pleasure.

EDOUARD (*to* BERTRAND). That's a fine dog you have there. He is good for all sorts of game.

BERTRAND. Yes, sir, and more than that, if need be, he would spring at a man's throat, if I told him to do it. He has been of use to me upon occasions.

EDOUARD. You had better sell him to me.

BERTRAND. Excuse me, sir, but my dog is not for sale. You are not for sale, are you, Médor? Good old fellow!

The COUNT. Come, gentlemen, let us lose no time. Let us be seated.

The COUNTESS (*before sitting down*). Edouard, you are to sit beside me. Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to believe that you will allow me to be present at your deliberations. I am only a woman, it is true, but I feel that my

courage is sufficient to permit me to brave the dangers that you will face. Moreover, it is not the first time a woman has been known to take part in a conspiracy. If I remember my old Plutarch aright the famous Lœena shared the glory of Harmodius and of Aristogiton. She cut out her tongue rather than reveal the names of her friends.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. My wife should do the same.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. Madame, we do not wish you to share the fate of Lœena—it would be too great a loss for us. But, we do not for a moment doubt that you would have as great courage and as great love for your rightful king.

The COUNTESS. Without wishing to boast, I yet may say that I feel sure enough of myself, to affirm that the sight of death itself could not affright me. What would one not brave for so noble a cause? (*She starts to sit down, then with a piercing scream*) Ah!

EDOUARD. What's the matter?

The COUNT (*frightened*). What is it? You didn't see anyone under the table, did you?

The COUNTESS. A spider on my chair. (*They all laugh.*)

BERTRAND (*crushing the spider*). Bad luck

to see a spider in the morning. Good luck if you see it in the evening. It is past noon.

Baron de Machicoulis. Smell this bottle, Countess. I understand your fright. It is a nervous affection, simply. I have more than once faced danger, and yet the mere sight of a mouse is too much for me.

Marquis de Malespine. My *bête noire is* toads. But they are poisonous.

Chevalier de Thimbray. They say that Ladislas, King of Poland, used to run away whenever he saw apples.

Count de Fierdonjon. I have heard it said that——

Edouard. But, I say, are we conspiring, or are we not?

The Count. My cousin is right. Gentlemen, in order to conduct our meetings in regular form, and especially to give them the air of gravity, which they should have, it seems to me it would be business-like to elect a president; and if no one else offers himself, I will volunteer to fill the office.

Baron de Machicoulis. But, Count, this is an irregular proceeding. As a president is a person who exercises considerable influence in this whole gathering, this same president should be elected by this same gathering, so that he may

properly represent the real feeling of the assembly, so that he may be, so to speak, the expression of the sentiments of the gathering.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. Certainly we must put it to a vote.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. But why should we put it to a vote? I would call your attention to the fact, gentlemen, that in all gatherings of our ancestors, of the nobility of this province, the Counts of Fierdonjon always occupied the president's chair. Now, since it is our aim to re-establish former customs, it seems to me——

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. Sir, I take the liberty of calling into question the accuracy of your statement. I possess amongst my papers an authentic document according to which, at the time of the birth of the great dauphin, a gathering of the nobility of this province was held in order to inaugurate fireworks and a ball to celebrate this happy event. And it was Pierre-Ponce de Machicoulis who was called upon by this assembly to preside over it and take complete charge of affairs.

The COUNT. And what about the Des Tournelles, gentlemen? You seem to be forgetting them. I don't think that any of you can for a moment contest the antiquity of our title.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. A thousand pardons,

Count, but in the archives of the province I find your name only some eighty-five years after mine.

The Count. My genealogy is to be relied upon that——

Marquis de Malespine. In 1452 the Malespine——

The Countess. Gentlemen, the proposal which Monsieur de Thimbray has just made will spare us an unpleasant discussion. Let us put it to a vote. Let each one write a name upon a slip of paper and deposit it in this urn.

Count de Fierdonjon. At any rate, I have not the least faith in genealogies; it is easy enough to manufacture them. Archives on the other hand are different; you can depend upon them.

Baron de Machicoulis. And monuments. You all know the carved stone——

The Count. What! A genealogy written on deer skin with gothic letters!

Marquis de Malespine. Pepin the Little bestowed—(*They all speak at once.* Edouard *rings the bell wildly.*)

Scene X

The same, François *enters.*

The Count. What does this idiot want in here?

François. Did Madame ring?

The Countess. No, you may go out again.

François. Then someone rang at the front door. I am going to see.

The Count. No, you idiot. No one has been ringing; go away and leave us. (François *goes out.*)

Scene XI

The same, except François.

The Countess. Let us give over this discussion, I beg you. Whatever choice we may make can not fail to be an excellent one. Here is paper, gentlemen. You can write the name of your candidate.

Chevalier de Thimbray. We should appoint some one to read the ballots who does not know our writing.

Baron de Machicoulis. A good thought.

Monsieur de Nangis, will you be so good as to take charge of the matter?

EDOUARD. Very gladly. (*Aside*) Amiable confidence in one another.

The COUNTESS (*to* BERTRAND). Come nearer, Bertrand. Why do you stay at one side? Write your ballot.

BERTRAND. You are very kind, indeed.

The COUNTESS. Write a name (*in a whisper*)—my husband's name.

BERTRAND. Ah! Madame, the fact is, I can't write. I am a poor peasant. I don't understand all these ceremonies in the very least. (*All except* BERTRAND *deposit their ballots in the urn.*)

EDOUARD. Is that all? Let us see. Monsieur de Machicoulis, one vote.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. Sir, I beg that you will burn the ballot at once.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON (*in a whisper to the* MARQUIS DE MALESPINE). I'll wager he wrote his own name.

EDOUARD. Monsieur de Fierdonjon, one vote.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS (*in a whisper to the* MARQUIS DE MALESPINE). What will you wager that he voted for himself?

COUNT DE FIERDONJON (*to* EDOUARD). Burn it, if you please, sir.

EDOUARD. M. des Tournelles, one vote. Madame des Tournelles, one vote. M. de Thimbray, one vote. (*The deuce.*) This is very queer. Each person has received a single vote.

The COUNTESS. Someone has voted for me. He has made a mistake; he doubtless intended it for my husband.

EDOUARD. Not at all; for I cast that vote, and I wished to elect you president.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. But that is an absurd idea. A woman could not sit as our president.

EDOUARD. I understand you to say it is an absurd idea? The expression strikes me as being so extraordinary, that I shall ask you to repeat it.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. I was saying, sir, that it was not customary to call upon a woman to occupy a president's chair.

EDOUARD. I make it a practice, sir, never to let pass an impertinence,—and——

The COUNTESS (*in a whisper*). Edouard, Edouard. (*Aloud*) Quick, quick, let us have a second ballot. (*In a whisper*) Edouard, vote for my husband. M. de Thimbray, do vote for my husband; he will make an excellent president. Come, Sans-Peur, you must vote, too, my good fellow. I will write for you. Monsieur de

Tournelles is the one you will wish to vote for. (*In a whisper*) Isn't he?

BERTRAND. Anything you wish, Madame.

EDOUARD (*counting the ballot*). Monsieur des Tournelles, one vote. Monsieur de Fierdonjon, Monsieur des Tournelles, Monsieur des Tournelles, Monsieur de Malespine, Monsieur de Machicoulis, Monsieur des Tournelles. Monsieur des Tournelles has four votes. Come, sir, take your place in the President's chair.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON (*in a whisper to the* MARQUIS DE MALESPINE). They have begun to cabal already. Oh! I can never stay with this pack.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS (*in a whisper to the* MARQUIS DE MALESPINE). She wants to run everything.

The COUNT. Gentlemen, before proceeding to the business of this meeting, I shall ask your permission to bring before you some general consideration upon the present state of affairs in Europe. I think that I am not wrong in believing that they will not be altogether devoid of interest. (*He draws from his pocket a rather large number of little sheets of note paper. These sheets are not fastened together.*)

EDOUARD. What! You are going to read all that to us? The deuce!

COUNT. It is written on one side and with a wide margin.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON (*aside*). He got himself elected President so that he could hold the floor all the time.

COUNT DES TOURNELLES (*coughs, clears his throat, puts on his spectacles, and reads the pages in a monotonous voice, and without paying any particular attention to the punctuation, as one would do in reading the work of another.* EDOUARD *in the meantime whispers in the ear of the* COUNTESS, *and she motions to him to listen. He pays no attention and thereupon she loses patience and turns her back upon him. Next he calls* BERTRAND'S *dog, pets it, makes it give its paw, etc. Then while the* COUNT *holds in his hand one of the loose sheets of his speech,* EDOUARD *takes two or three from the table without his noticing it, crumples them up into a ball, gives them to the dog, who tears them to pieces.. No one notices this manœuvre.* The COUNT (*Reads*) "The ways of Providence are divine in their inscrutability. There is no evil in nature that has not its antidote. What poison is there, no matter how terrible in its violence, which can not be successfully combatted by the remedies which the kind hand of Providence offers us? And by a forethought, for which we can not be too grateful, we

see these remedies in greatest profusion in those climes where man seems to be exposed to the greatest dangers. Travellers who have penetrated into the depths of those countries which are always parched by a blazing sun, tell us of those terrible serpents whose slightest bite seems to be followed by inevitable death. Ah! let them not forget to tell us that these same serpents usually take refuge under the broad leaves of those very plants whose saps when applied to the wounds revives the unfortunate victim and soon restores him to health. The manchineel-tree, whose mere shadow breathes death, grows only, by divine Providence, near the ocean waves; and sea-water, as we all know, is a certain antidote of the poison which it exhales. So, Gentlemen, when we see a people torn by baneful dissensions, or groaning under the iron rod of an oppressor, do not let us give ourselves up to fruitless despair, but let us look about us for the remedy or medicine which Providence doubtless holds in reserve.'"

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY (*aside*). That all smacks too much of pharmacy.

"Yes, Gentlemen, the study of history, which is too often merely an amusement for the man of the world, would become, by the crimes of which it draws the hideous picture,

a subject of disgust and of horror for the humanitarian philosopher, did not the consoling thought that a hidden Providence presides over the destiny of empires come to support the book about to fall from his hand, and show him that if, too often, some men forgetting divine precepts, and giving themselves up a prey to their unbridled passions, open up for their fellow-citizens and for themselves an abyss of ills, often too, and as if, so to speak, by an enforced sequence other men, the virtuous, inspired by Heaven, use their courage as a protecting dike against the devastating torrent of revolutions, and close up by their powerful hands the maelstrom which is about to swallow up their country! ! ! (*Aside*) Ouf! (*Reading*) A man was found—infirm—mutilated, condemned to spend in suffering——"

The Countess (*prompting him*). No; a Christain orator once said——

The Count. Quite right—"A man was found—" Excuse me, Gentlemen, a paper must have been misplaced— Well now, I can't find it. Can it have been mislaid? Still, my dearest, when you copied the manuscript for me, nothing was missing. Ah! Isn't this it? "A man was found," said the usurper——no. I don't know what has become of it.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. A man was found, but a paper was lost.

The COUNTESS. My dear, have you not the rough copy?

The COUNT. No, I burned it. But really I can not understand this.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. While M. des Tournelles is looking for his speech, will you, in order that we lose no time, listen to a few brief reflections, which have been suggested to me by recent political events?

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE (*at the same time*). I have prepared a short paper, and if you will have the goodness to give me your attention for half an hour——

(*The* COUNT DE FIERDONJON *draws out his portfolio, and* CHEVALIER DE THIMBLY *searches his pockets.*)

EDOUARD. Heaven be merciful! Each one has his address prepared. Cousin Mélanie, we are lost; we shall never get a chance to dine. And you, Monsieur Bertrand, haven't you your speech by any chance?

BERTRAND. No, sir; still if I dared I would say a word or two; but I'm afraid of putting my foot in it; for I am only a plain peasant.

EDOUARD. A speech, a speech! I know that what you say will be good fun. Silence, Gen-

tlemen, silence! Listen to Monsieur Bertrand. (*He raps on the table.*)

BERTRAND. What I wished to say is very simple. I wished to say, that saving your presence, we are playing like children. Let us leave sermons to the priests. We don't need so many fine speeches to agree upon our course of action. When I was with Jean de Chouan he never had a good deal to say to us. He would say, "How would it be if we surprised the Blues at the Herbages Farm?" We would say, "Yes." He would say, "Have you cartridges? Have you fresh flint in your guns?" We would say, "Yes." He would say, "Let us drink a glass, forward march, vive le roi!" We would clink glasses, and march off.

EDOUARD. Bravo! Morbleu, Monsieur Bertrand is the one to carry off the prize for oratory.

BERTRAND. When I came here I had no idea that you needed all these grand speeches to stir you up to do what is right. I merely thought that you were going to set things in motion. I thought, for instance, that I might be told, "Sans Peur, you are to surprise the station of gendarmes at X——." "You, M. de Machicoulis, saving your presence, you are to try to lay hands on the Prefect"—just like that, with no more

ceremony. I had brought cartridges and I had filled my powder-flask.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. The deuce! How he slashes into things.

The COUNT. I thank Heaven we have not yet come to that.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. My friend, you are not with Jean de Chouan's men now; you are with educated gentlemen, which is very different. Listen in silence and respect to what you can not understand.

BERTRAND. I am quite willing, but——

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE. We are not asking your opinion.

The COUNTESS. Gentlemen, what do you think of leaving your addresses for another occasion? Just now we have so many things to regulate. You have just elected your President, but we have many important points to decide upon. For instance, what is to be the name of your society? We must have a name by which to be called when History speaks of us.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. Well, History will say, "The Count de Fierdonjon, M. des Tournelles——"

The COUNT. My wife means it would be well if all persons who co-operate in this society bore a generic, a collective name.

EDOUARD. Ah! a collective name; that makes me think of my Latin, *Turba ruit* or *ruunt.*

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. Very well, and why not call ourselves "The real gentlemen"?

EDOUARD. No; we should have a name that sounds well, like those in a melodrama, "The Knights of the Swan," "The Free Judges." Why should we not call ourselves "The Knights of Death"? It is imposing and harmonious.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. Why not? As a matter of fact it is rather an imposing name.

The COUNT. Oh! It is a little too terrible; I should prefer——

The COUNTESS. Let us rather choose a name that reminds us of the object of our conspiracy. "The Friends of Misfortune." Does that name meet with your approval? Do you not indeed espouse the cause of misfortune? This name will gather around us all noble hearts.

EDOUARD. Good suggestion—carried!

BERTRAND. "The Friends of Misfortune." So when we cry "Qui Vive," and they don't answer "Friends of Misfortune"—I give them a shot?

EDOUARD. Father Bertrand hits right out. You have seen something of soldiering, eh?

BERTRAND. Why, sir, for years I did nothing else.

The COUNTESS. Bertrand fought in the war of la Vendée. He was major in the royal army.

EDOUARD. Yes, yes, the war of the Chouans —war of skirmishes—behind hedges, shots at laggards. Peste! a pretty war that—men had long lives in those days.

BERTRAND. That depended. There are lots of young men, and of old men too, who would have been strong and well to-day if they had not been killed in that pretty war. There are some men who are astonished to see their corn growing so high in some places that I know—it is thanks to the men who are buried there. I, with my own eyes, sir, have seen more than one engagement in which those who escaped owed a thumping big candle to the Holy Virgin. One day on the downs of Gros-Sablon there were two hundred of us who met an equal number of Blues. We defeated them—but in the evening there were only forty-five of us at rations.

EDOUARD. No doubt. It must have been hotly contested. How many of the vanquished were there left?

BERTRAND. Not one.

EDOUARD. Of a truth, that wasn't bad.

The Count. If these gentlemen begin talking war, we shall never get anywhere.

The Countess. The Friends of Misfortune must wear some emblem by means of which they may be recognised.

Baron de Machicoulis. By the police? The dickens, no!

The Countess. I mean a hidden emblem. For instance, each one of us, of you gentlemen, would wear a dagger of a certain design.

Edouard. Yes, yes, a dagger! To begin with, there can be no conspiracy without daggers. The dagger of vengeance—the mysterious steel— Have you seen the melodrama of the "Free Judges"?

Count de Fierdonjon. Yes, a dagger. I don't see anything out of the way about that, and then it might be useful.

Bertrand. It's a good weapon, all the same, without seeming so. You have to give a down stroke (*making a gesture as if striking*). Excuse me, sir, like that—so that the blood won't flow, and will smother you in no time.

Baron de Machicoulis. Horrors! We don't wish to assassinate anyone—we don't need your lessons.

Bertrand. Then why?

Chevalier de Thimbray. It is a mark of

distinction, but French gentlemen do no use such weapons.

The COUNT. There is a police regulation forbidding it. It would be dangerous.

BERTRAND. Still, Lescure, Charette, la Rochejaquelin, all those gentlemen had them in their day, and anyone who would have dared to lay a hand on them would have found out that they knew how to use them.

The COUNTESS (*aside*). This man's talk really makes me shudder. (*Aloud*) The handle of the daggers should be white—our colour—and of ivory, or mother of pearl, inlaid with silver. I shall prepare a design and on the blade we shall have the word "Fidelity" engraved in Latin. That would be in good taste, don't you think so?

EDOUARD. My word! Hurray for my cousin and conspiracies. She is splendid at them. Don't worry about your daggers, my dear colleagues; I am going to Spain; that is where they make the very finest thing to be had in the way of daggers. Even the women keep them hidden in their bodices or garters. An officer of the Dragoons who has just come back from there has been telling me all about it. Really, now, no joke, you have to be careful about them; they are treacherous as the devil.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. Your friend, sir, must have visited those regions, since he has made there all these fine discoveries.

BERTRAND. Bah! Keep your ivory and pearl daggers. They are all very fine for show; but if it be blood of a Blue that you want to let, give me a good strong weapon like this (*he draws out a great knife*). It is rough-looking, but it is not dear. One day I stumbled over a stone and fell flat. An officer of the Blues put his knee on my stomach, and raising his sabre, called upon me to surrender. I said to him that Jean de Chouan used to say, " Not much danger of it " ! and I planted my dagger in his mouth. And sure as I am speaking he swallowed it, as if it were a spoonful of soup. Look! you can still see the dents of his teeth on the blade.

The COUNTESS. Oh, do take away this horrid dagger. I fancy that I see it still dripping with blood.

The COUNT. Enough of that, my good fellow. That is not the matter of interest. Let us settle down to business.

BERTRAND. Well, then, when shall we sound the tocsin?

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. The tocsin! Of what are you thinking? And with the gendarmes and the military station at——

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE. And the Prefect, who would send us all to prison.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. The fellow is possessed.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. The fruit is not yet ripe, my good man.

BERTRAND. You would not dare to pick it, even if it were rotten.

The COUNT. Now that our society is somewhat organised, what shall be our first undertaking? (*Profound silence.*)

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. Our best plan would be to quietly exert our influence upon the minds of those around us to alienate them from the usurper. If we could only find some way of secretly printing some brief considerations upon——

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE. My address might be printed at the same time.

The COUNT. And mine, too, when I find it. I can't believe that it is lost.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. The trouble would be to find a printer who would be perfectly reliable.

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE. If worst came to worst, we could circulate manuscript copies.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. Yes, but people know our writing.

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE. If the Countess were willing to take the trouble. A woman's writing would never be under suspicion.

The COUNT. Don't for a moment think of it. Everyone knows my wife's writing.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. Another trouble is that few of the people hereabout can read. (*Silence.*)

BERTRAND. Well, you listen for a minute. I see that things are going badly, and that amongst us are very few who are willing to risk their necks for the good cause. An idea occurs to me. When I say that it occurs to me, I mean that it occurs to me again, for I have very often thought of it. I am nothing but a poor peasant, I am growing old, and I am no longer of much use—nevertheless——

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. Nevertheless, you are still very well able to kill partridge wherever you find them.

BERTRAND. I don't deny I still am a good enough shot. Now then, I was thinking: we must do something. What keeps our king from coming back is the other who has taken his place. And yet that other is not the devil. His skin is not so tough as an oaken plank, and I have seen chaps who cut through at a single blow an oaken plank two inches thick.

The COUNT. What are you driving at?

BERTRAND. This is it. I was thinking: I am old, yes, but in spite of that I support my wife and boy. If I die they would be left begging for bread. If you gentlemen would sign an agreement, promising them 1,200 livres after my death, here is what I would promise to do: I will set out for Paris, I will try to see the Emperor, and if I can get within arm's length of him he is a dead man. If I fail—well, another can do what I wished to do. They will shoot me; but I shall have the consolation that at least my wife and boy will not lack for bread.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. Morbleu! It would be enough to get us all shot.

EDOUARD. He is simply possessed. Assassinate the Emperor! It is worse than a Spanish monk.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS (*in a whisper to* COUNTESS DES TOURNELLES). Do you think this scamp is a spy by any chance?

BERTRAND. The agreement, of course, would be put in safe-keeping. It would not be shown until after my death.

The COUNTESS. This man frightens me quiet out of my wits. What a terrible desperado he is!

The Count. My good fellow, your proposal is certainly most remarkable; we should need to have in you the most complete confidence——

Bertrand. Parbleu! you only risk 1,200 livres among you all, and I risk my neck.

Count de Fierdonjon. Yes, but my fine fellow, supposing you once got to Paris, and let the police bribe you to tell everything?

Marquis de Malespine. And the promise of a pension would be evidence against us.

Bertrand. Do you think then that I could be guilty of informing against you? Gentlemen, I am going to let you see the kind of man I am. (*He unbuttons his coat, and draws out from a leather bag hung on his breast, a letter which he throws on the table.*) Read this paper; you can read, so read it!

Edouard. This paper is a bit greasy, but never mind. (*Reads*) To the Lieutenant-General of His Majesty's Armies: I hereby certify to all to whom it may concern, that Joseph Bertrand, known as Sans-Peur, Major in our army, has always shown himself trusty and brave upon every occasion. Of his courage and devotion not enough can be said. In token of which we have given him this present certificate, hoping that it

may at some time prove useful to him. (Signed) Henri de la Rochejaquelin. At the General Quarters of S—y, 179—.

BERTRAND. Who amongst you can show a paper signed by an honest man, who answers for your honour and fidelity?

The COUNTESS (*looking out in the direction of the court-yard*). Good Heavens, what do I see?

The COUNT. What is it next? A spider?

EDOUARD. A gendarme on horseback is coming into the court-yard.

ALL (*rising*). A gendarme!

The COUNT. We are discovered. We are undone.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. Des Tournelles—Madame—hide us. Help us to escape—you are responsible for us. We are in your house.

The COUNTESS. What can we do?

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. At least you will attest that I came here only against my will, and absolutely ignorant of what was going to be done.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS, MARQUIS DE MALESPINE, CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. And I too.

The COUNT. Quite on the contrary; you led

me astray and dragged me on. Your address proves it.

ALL. Oh, our wretched addresses. (*They tear them up and throw them into the fire.*)

The COUNTESS. Edouard, don't forsake me!

BERTRAND. No danger of it. There is only one gendarme, you say?

The COUNT. I see another at the main door. The house is surrounded.

ALL. Surrounded!

EDOUARD. And how do you know this gendarme has come to arrest you? It is some notice——

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. Yes, a notice from the Prefect's to arrest us.

BERTRAND. I have a double-barrelled gun. There is no danger, as Jean de Chouan used to say.

The COUNTESS. Go out of this little door, and get into the garden. Here is the key of the back gate. If only it is not guarded! At least let us swear together that we will never betray one another!

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. Quick, give me the key. (*He goes out with the* BARON DE MACHICOULIS *and the* CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY.)

The COUNTESS (*to the* COUNT, *who tries to*

run away too). Where are you going? Stay here; you should not go out of the house.

EDOUARD. You get excited for no reason.

The COUNTESS (*to* EDOUARD). Speak to this soldier. Your épaulettes will command his respect.

BERTRAND (*examining the charge of his gun, to his dog*). Easy, Médor, easy, old boy!

The COUNTESS. Sans-Peur, in Heaven's name, no bloodshed here. I should die.

BERTRAND (*coldly*). I shall not shoot until you make sign to me.

SCENE XII

The same. A GENDARME.

The GENDARME. Monsieur des Tournelles. This is the place, is it not? A letter from the Prefect.

EDOUARD. Give it to me. Here it is, Cousin Mélanie.

The GENDARME. Will you sign a receipt, and put down the time?

The COUNTESS (*to the* COUNT). Sign it, my dear. Edouard, give this gentleman a glass of wine, he must be thirsty. No doubt he rode over very quickly.

EDOUARD (*filling a glass for him*). Here, you haven't wine like this at the canteen.

The GENDARME. Oh, no, lieutenant. (*He drinks*) To your health, Madame, to your health, Sir, to the health of you all. Helloa, Father Sans-Peur—and so you are here. Be careful; the brigadier says that if he catches you again shooting without a permit to carry arms he'll clap you into jail.

BERTRAND. Not much danger.

The COUNT (*to the* GENDARME). Here is the receipt.

The GENDARME. Many thanks for your kindness, Madame. (*He goes out.*)

SCENE XIII

The COUNT, *the* COUNTESS, EDOUARD, BERTRAND.

The COUNT (*to the* COUNTESS). Open this letter. I dare not read it.

The COUNTESS (*opens the letter and hastily runs through it*). Oh, heavens!

The COUNT (*trembling*). Alas!

The COUNTESS. Can it be possible? You have been named Chamberlain to the Empress.

The COUNT. Can it be true? Oh, joy!

The Countess (*coldly*). The appointment is made without your having asked for it. (Edouard *bursts out laughing.*)

The Count (*in a whisper*). What have we been doing, and what guilty aberrations!

The Countess. Hush! Let us forget this day. Bertrand, my good man, come to see us now and then. Never hesitate to shoot over our grounds, and here, take this to buy a new bonnet for your wife. (*She offers him money.*)

Bertrand (*refusing it*). My wife has no need of a bonnet.

The Countess. You can count upon our discretion.

Bertrand (*with a scornful smile*). I see that you are counting on more.

The Countess. Yes, my dear Bertrand, I count upon it. You are willing?

Bertrand. You are quite right. Come to think it all over, on the whole it is better to shoot partridges. Countess, gentlemen, your servant —Médor, come here, sir. (*He goes out.*)

Edouard (*calling out at the window*). Halloa there, gentlemen, where are you? Good news; it was a false alarm! . . . Come back. Ha! ha! ha! There's someone who has fallen into the pond—he is covered with mud— Come back, come back— Cousin Mélanie, you will

use your influence for me at court. You will tell the Emperor of the love and respect for him which I have expressed.

The COUNTESS. Edouard!

The COUNT. What can we say to them?

The COUNTESS. Just leave it to me.

SCENE XIV

The COUNT, *the* COUNTESS, EDOUARD, *the* BARON DE MACHICOULIS, *the* COUNT DE FIERDONJON, *the* MARQUIS DE MALESPINE, *the* CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. (*The* COUNT DE FIERDONJON *is all wet and covered with mud.*)

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. Ah, curse the house! I shall be crippled for the rest of my days! You say that there is no danger?

The COUNTESS (*to the* COUNT DE FIERDONJON). What is the trouble, Count?

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. He was running and fell into the pond. The key which he was holding in his hand is at the bottom of the water. But for that we should have been in the open country. But did the gendarme arrest Bertrand, since we don't see him here?

The COUNTESS. No, but we have just re-

ceived news, which to us is very sad. It has quite upset our plans.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON. Is that all?

The COUNTESS. An unlooked-for blow has fallen upon us; we must leave at once for Paris. My husband has just been appointed Chamberlain to the Empress; and as, if he refused, he would compromise himself, as well as his friends——

EDOUARD. He is going to accept, he is going to sacrifice himself. You can see how he is quite overcome, my poor old cousin.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON (*aside*). Chamberlain to the Empress. It is a good appointment. (*Aloud*) Could you let me have a change of clothing? (*He goes out.*)

BARON DE MACHICOULIS. I see that there is nothing more for me to do here.

The COUNTESS (*taking leave of him*). Goodbye, Baron; we must hold ourselves in reserve for happier times.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY (*to the* COUNT). By the way, my son is going to enlist soon. He is studying at Paris, and is a fine fellow. Do you not think that with your influence——(*He talks to him in an undertone.*)

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE. Since you are going to Paris, may I hope that you will be so

kind as to speak a word in my favour, to the Judge, about this confounded lawsuit which ——? (*He talks to the* COUNT *in an undertone.*)

The COUNT. You may rest assured, my dear friends, that I will never forget you—and if some day— Alas!—my good friends, good-bye.

(*The* MARQUIS *and the* CHEVALIER *go out.*)

EDOUARD. Well, Cousin Mélanie, when is my conversion to take place?

The COUNTESS. Now, just let me take charge of things. I intend that inside of two months you are to be Captain in the Guards. (*To the* COUNT) My dear, you must leave for Paris tomorrow, and thank His Majesty for this mark of favour. I shall follow close after you, as soon as my court wardrobe is ready. Edouard will take me to Paris.

EDOUARD. Yes, Cousin Mélanie, I will take you to Paris. (*Aside*) Quick-step!

FEDERIGO

FEDERIGO *

ONCE on a time there was a young nobleman named Federigo. He was handsome, well built, courteous and easy tempered, but of exceedingly dissolute habits, for he was inordinately fond of wine, women and gaming, especially gaming. He never went to confession, and he frequented the churches only to find chances for indulging in sinful pleasures.

Now Federigo ruined at the gambling-table twelve young men who afterward became brigands and perished unshriven in a fierce battle with the *condottieri* of the King. And it befell that he himself, in less time than it takes in the telling, lost all that he had won, and in addition his whole patrimony, save a little manor whither he retired to hide his poverty behind the hills of Cava.

For three years he had been living in seclu-

* This tale is popular in the kingdom of Naples. Like so many other stories coming from the same region, it shows a quaint blending of Greek mythology and Christian beliefs. It seems to have been written toward the close of the Middle Ages.

sion, hunting by day and in the evening playing his game of hombre with his steward. One evening when he had just come home after the best day's hunting he had had, Jesus Christ, followed by the twelve apostles, knocked at his door and asked for shelter. Federigo, who was a generous soul, was delighted to see the guests come at a time when he had the wherewithal to feast them well. So he welcomed the pilgrims into his cottage, invited them with all possible cordiality to his board, and begged them to excuse him if he could not offer them what was befitting them, as they found him at a moment when his larder was exceedingly bare. Our Lord, who knew what to believe concerning the opportunities of this visit, forgave Federigo this little display of vanity, since he showed himself so hospitably inclined.

"We shall be well satisfied with what you have," He said to him; "but pray have supper served as speedily as you may: for my friend here is very hungry," he added, pointing out St. Peter.

Federigo did not wait to be asked a second time, and wishing to offer his guests something besides what he had got in the hunt, he ordered his steward to lay hands on his last kid, which was straightway put on the spit.

When supper was ready and the company seated at the table, Federigo had only one regret, which was that his wine was not better.

" Sire," he said to Jesus Christ, " I wish very much that my wine were better; nevertheless, such as it is, I offer it with sincere hospitality."

Whereupon our Lord, having tasted the wine, said to Federigo, " Why do you complain? Your wine is perfect. Just ask my friend here what he thinks about it " (pointing to St. Peter).

St. Peter, having quaffed it with relish, declared it excellent (*proprio stupendo*) and begged his host to drink with him.

Federigo, who looked upon all this as mere civilities, nevertheless acceded to the apostle's request; but what was his surprise to find that this wine was more delicious than any he had ever tasted in the days of his affluence! Becoming aware, from this miracle, of the presence of the Saviour, he at once arose from his seat as being unworthy to sit at table with that holy company. But our Lord commanded him to be seated; which order he obeyed without any great protest. After the supper, during which they were waited up by the steward and his wife, Jesus retired with the apostles into the room which had been prepared for them. Federigo, being left alone with the steward, played his game of

hombre, as usual, and drank what was left of the miraculous wine.

The next day when the holy travellers were gathered together in the parlour with the master of the house, Jesus Christ said to Federigo:

"We are greatly pleased with the reception which thou hast accorded us, and we wish to recompense thee. 'Ask any three favours and they will be granted thee; for all power has been given to us in Heaven, and upon earth, and in Hades."

Then Federigo drew from his pocket a pack of cards which he always carried with him and said: "Master, grant that I may always win when I play with these cards."

"So be it!" said Jesus Christ. (*Ti sia concesso.*)

But St. Peter, who was near Federigo, whispered to him, "Of what art thou thinking, miserable sinner? Thou shouldst pray the Master for the salvation of thy soul."

"Oh, I don't worry much about that," answered Federigo.

"Thou hast yet two favours to receive," said Jesus Christ.

"Master," continued the host, "since Thou art so gracious, grant, I pray you, that whosoever climbs into the orange tree that shades my

door shall be unable to come down again without my permission."

"So be it," said Jesus Christ.

At these words the apostle St. Peter, nudging his neighbour violently, said, "Miserable sinner, dost thou not fear the hell-fire which awaits thy sins? Ask the Master to accord thee a place in Paradise; there is still time. . . ."

"There is no hurry," replied Federigo drawing away from the apostle. And our Lord having said: "What dost thou ask as a third favour?"

"I beg," he answered, "that whosoever may seat himself upon this bench shall be unable to rise without my permission."

Our Lord having granted this prayer as well as the other two, departed with his disciples.

The last apostle was no more than out of the house, when Federigo, wishing to prove the virtue of his cards, called his steward, and played a game of hombre with him without looking at his hand. He won the game in a trice; as well as a second and a third. So being quite confirmed in his confidence, he set out for town, lodged at the best inn, where he took the finest apartment. The news of his arrival spread very quickly and his old dissolute companions crowded to see him.

"We thought that you were lost for good and all," cried Don Giuseppe. "We were assured that you had become a hermit."

"That was quite true," answered Federigo.

"How the deuce have you been spending your time these last three years that we have not been seeing you?" the others asked all at once.

"In praying, my dear brethren," answered Federigo in a most pious voice: "here is my prayer-book," he added, drawing from his pocket his pack of cards which he had most carefully preserved.

This answer created an outburst of laughing, and everyone was convinced that Federigo had repaired his shattered fortunes in foreign parts at the expense of less skilful players than those with whom he then was, and they were all keen to ruin him a second time. Some wished without any further delay to drag him over to a gambling-table. But Federigo, after begging them to defer the game until evening, invited the company into a room, where according to his orders a dainty repast had been served. It was hailed with enthusiasm, needless to say.

This dinner was somewhat more lively than the apostles'; it is true nothing was drunk but Malvoisie and Lacryma; but the merry-makers with one exception knew no better wine.

Before the arrival of his guests Federigo had provided himself with a pack of cards exactly like the first, in order that he might at will substitute it for the other, and by losing one or two games avoid suspicion on the part of his adversaries. One he carried in his right pocket and the other in his left.

When the dinner was over and the noble band seated around a baize-covered table Federigo placed the unblessed cards first on the table and limited the stakes to a moderate sum for the whole séance. Wishing then to interest himself in the game and gauge his own ability, he played his best for the two first games, and lost them one after the other, not without a certain amount of inward annoyance. Then he called for wine and taking advantage of the moment when the winners were drinking to their past and future successes, he took away the unblessed cards and replaced them with the pack that had been blessed. When the third game was begun, as Federigo paid no attention to his own hand whatever he had leisure to watch the others—and he found that they were not playing fairly. This discovery delighted him greatly, as he felt that he could with a perfectly clear conscience empty his adversaries' pockets. He had been ruined, he now saw, by their dishonesty, not by

their skill in playing, nor their good fortune. He could then have a better opinion of his own relative force, an opinion justified by previous successes. Self-esteem, to what will it not attach itself? The certainty of revenge and of gain are sentiments that are very sweet to the human heart. Federigo experienced them one and all at the same time. But thinking of the twelve young men at whose expense he had grown rich, and feeling persuaded that they were the only honest players with whom he had ever had to do, he repented for the first time his victory over them. A slight shadow clouded his face which had been shining with joy, and he sighed deeply as he won the third game.

This game was succeeded by several others, and Federigo arranged to win the greater number of them, so that he raked in, that first evening, enough to pay for his dinner, and the rent of his apartments for a month. That was all he wished for the first day. His companions withdrew greatly disappointed, but promising to return the following day.

The next day and succeeding days Federigo arranged to win and lose so aptly that in a short time he acquired a considerable fortune, without anyone's suspecting the real cause. Then he left his hotel and went to live in a large palace,

where he gave, from time to time, most magnificent entertainments. The loveliest women disputed his most passing glance. His table was covered every day with the most exquisite wines, and the palace of Federigo became renowned as the centre of pleasures.

At the end of a year's discreet gambling he resolved to make his revenge complete by draining the pockets of the foremost noblemen of the country. To this end, having converted the greater part of his money into precious stones, he invited those gentlemen eight days beforehand to an unsually splendid feast, for which he had called into requisition the best musicians, dancers, etc. This entertainment was to end with a game with fat stakes. Those who had no money squeezed it out of the Jews. The others brought what they had, and all was swept away. Federigo departed in the night with his gold and his diamonds.

From that moment he never used the magic cards except with dishonest gamblers, finding that he could play a strong enough game himself to win from the others. So he went through all the cities in the world, playing everywhere, always winning, and at every halt feasting upon the fat of the land.

Nevertheless, the memory of his twelve vic-

tims was ever present in his mind, and poisoned all his joys. At last he decided one fine day either to deliver them, or to perish with them.

Having so resolved he set out for hell with a staff in his hand and a sack on his back, and with no escort save his favourite hound Marchesella. When he reached Sicily he climbed Mount Gibel, then went down into the volcano as far below the foot of the mountain as the mountain itself rises above Piedmont. Thence, in order to go to Pluto's abode, you must cross a court which is guarded by Cerberus. Federigo got across without any difficulty, while Cerberus was playing with the hound, and knocked at Pluto's door.

When he had been led into the monarch's presence:

"Who art thou?" demanded the king of the infernal abyss.

"I am Federigo, the gambler."

"What in the devil's name dost thou here?"

"Pluto, if thou deemest the best gambler on earth worthy to play a game of hombre with thee, here is what I would propose: we shall play as many games as thou wilt. If I lose by a single game then my soul will rightfully belong to thee, as well as all those that people thy realm. But if I win, I shall have the right to choose

from among thy subjects one soul for every game I win, and I shall be entitled to carry them off with me."

"So be it," said Pluto.

And he called for a pack of cards.

"Here is one," said Federigo, immediately drawing from his pocket the miraculous pack, and they began to play.

Federigo won the first game, and asked for the soul of Stephen Pagani, one of the twelve whom he wished to save. It was at once handed over, and having received it, he put it in his bag. In the same way he won a second game, then a third up to the twelfth game, each time asking for and putting into his sack one of the souls in which he was interested. When he had finished the dozen he offered to continue playing.

"Very gladly," said Pluto (who however was annoyed at losing), "but let us go out a moment; some very disagreeable odour seems to pervade this apartment."

Now he was trying to find a pretext for getting rid of Federigo, for scarcely was the latter outside with his sack and his souls, when Pluto shouted with all his might to close the door upon him.

Federigo having again traversed the courtyard of Hades without Cerberus's noticing it, so

charmed was he with the hound, once more reached the summit of Mount Gibel. Then he called Marchesella, who speedily rejoined him, and went down again toward Messina more elated over this spiritual success than he had ever been over any worldly success. When he reached Messina he set sail to return to *terra firma* and end his days in his old manor house.

. . . . . .

A few months later Marchesella gave birth to a litter of little monsters, some of which had as many as three heads. They were all drowned.

. . . . . .

At the end of thirty years (Federigo was then seventy) Death came to his door and told him to put his affairs in order, for his hour was come.

"I am ready," said the dying man; "but before you carry me off, O Death, give me, I pray you, some of the fruit from the tree that shades my door. Just this one little pleasure and I shall die happy."

"If that is all you need," said Death, "I am quite willing to satisfy you."

He got into the orange tree to gather an orange: but when he tried to get down he could not: Federigo would not allow it.

"Ah! Federigo! you have deceived me," cried he: "I am now in your power: but give me back my liberty and I will promise you ten more years of life."

"Ten years! That is not much!" exclaimed Federigo. "If you wish to come down, my friend, you must be more liberal than that."

"I'll give you twenty."

"Come! Be serious!"

"I'll give you thirty."

"That is not even one-third enough."

"Do you wish then to live for a century?"

"Just exactly, my dear."

"Federigo, you are unreasonable."

"What would you have? I like to live."

"Well, then, take a hundred years," said Death; "it will have to come to that."

And at once he was able to get down. As soon as Death departed Federigo arose in perfect health, and began a new life with all the strength of a young man and the experience of an old one. All that is known of this new existence is that he continued to satisfy every craving of his carnal appetite, doing a little good when occasion arose, but giving no more attention to his soul's salvation than in his first life.

The hundred years rolled around and Death

came again to knock at his door, and found him in bed.

"Are you ready?" he said.

"I have just sent for my confessor," said Federigo; "sit down by the fire until he comes. I am just waiting to be absolved and then I will fly with you into eternity."

Death, who was a kindly person, went and sat down on the bench in the ingle-nook, and waited for a whole hour without seeing any priest appear. Beginning at last to lose patience he said to his host:

"Old man, once again, have you not had time to put your affairs into order during the whole century that has passed since I saw you before?"

"My word, I had something else to do," answered the old man with a mocking smile.

"Well," answered Death, indignant at his impiousness, "you have only one minute longer to live."

"Bah!" said Federigo, while Death tried in vain to get up. "I know by experience that you are too obliging to refuse to grant me a few years of respite."

"A few years, wretched man!" and he made vain efforts to leave the ingle-nook.

"Yes, certainly, but this time I shall not require so much, and as I am not very fond of old

age I shall be satisfied with eighty years for the third round."

Death saw that he was held to the bench, as he had been once before to the orange tree, by some supernatural power; but in his rage he was unwilling to grant anything.

"I know how I can bring you to reason," said Federigo.

And he had three fagots thrown on the fire. In a moment the flames filled the whole fireplace so that Death was horribly tortured.

"Spare me! Spare me!" he cried as he felt the flames burning him to the bone. "I'll promise you eighty years of health."

Upon hearing these words Federigo broke the charm, and Death fled half roasted.

At the end of the time agreed upon he came back to wait for his man, who was awaiting him with his sack on his back.

"Your hour has come this time and no mistake," said Death, entering brusquely; "no drawing back now. But what do you mean to do with this sack?"

"It contains the souls of twelve gambler friends of mine whom I once delivered from hell."

"Let them return with you!" said Death, and seizing Federigo by the hair, he flew away

toward the south and with his prey plunged down into the abyss of Mount Gibel. When he reached the gate of hell, he knocked three times.

"Who is there?" said Pluto.

"Federigo, the gambler," answered Death.

"Don't open the door," cried Pluto, who at once remembered the twelve games which he had lost; "that rogue would depopulate my realm."

As Pluto refused to open, Death carried his prisoner off to Purgatory; but the angel at the door refused him admission seeing that he was in a state of mortal sin. It was necessary then at all cost and to the great regret of Death, who bore Federigo a grudge, to wing his way to the celestial regions.

"Who art thou?" said St. Peter to Federigo when Death had set him down at the gate of Paradise.

"Your old host," he answered, "the one who regaled you with the game he himself had hunted."

"Dost thou dare present thyself here in the state in which I see thee?" cried St. Peter. "Dost thou not know that Heaven is closed to such as thee? What! thou art not even fit for Purgatory and thou desirest a place in Paradise!"

"St. Peter," said Federigo, "is it thus that

I received thee when thou camest with thy Divine Master, some hundred and eighty years ago, to ask hospitality from me?"

"That is all very well," replied St. Peter in a reproving voice, though somewhat touched by the reference. "But I can not take upon myself to let you in. I will go and tell Jesus Christ about your arrival. We shall see what he will say about it."

Our Lord hearing the news came to the gate of Paradise, where he found Federigo kneeling at the gate with his twelve souls, six on each side. Then allowing himself to be moved with compassion:

"Thou mayst pass," he said to Federigo, "but these twelve souls whom hell claims, I could not in all conscience allow them to pass."

"What, my Lord," said Federigo, "when I had the honour of receiving thee in my house wert thou not accompanied by twelve travellers whom I received with thee, with all the hospitality that I could show."

"Really, one can not resist this man," said Jesus Christ. "Come in, then, since ye are all here: but boast not of this favour I have shown. It would really be too bad a precedent."

1820.

LETTERS FROM SPAIN

WRITTEN TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE *REVUE DE PARIS*

LETTERS FROM SPAIN

WRITTEN TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE *REVUE DE PARIS*

I

MADRID, *October* 25, 1830.

SIR:—Bull-fights are still very much in vogue in Spain: but amongst Spaniards of the better class there are very few who do not feel a certain shame in acknowledging their liking for a kind of entertainment which is beyond all question exceedingly cruel. So they try to advance weighty reasons to justify their interest. First, it is a national amusement. The word *national* alone would be enough in itself, for in Spain lobby patriotism is as strong as it is in France. Next, they add, the Romans must have been greater barbarians than we, since they pitted men to fight against men. Finally, the economists add, agriculture is improved by this custom: for the high price brought in by bulls induces farmers to raise large herds. It must be remembered that every bull has not the mettle

to attack men and horses, and that, out of twenty, it is hard to find one brave enough to appear in the arena; while the other nineteen are made use of for tilling the soil. The only argument which they do not dare bring forward, and which nevertheless would be unanswerable, is that, cruel or not, this spectacle is so interesting, so absorbing, and arouses emotions so violent that if you have once felt the effect of the first visit, it is impossible to give up the sport. Strangers who go to the arena for the first time, and only to do what they conceive to be their duty as travellers, become in a little while as wildly enthusiastic over bull-fights as the Spaniards themselves. To the shame of humanity be it admitted, war, with all its horrors, has a most extraordinary attraction; especially to those who view it from a safe shelter.

St. Augustine tells us that in his youth he felt the strongest repugnance for gladiatorial combats, which he had as yet never seen. Being compelled, however, by a friend to go along to one of these pompous butcheries, he vowed to himself that he would shut his eyes during the whole performance. At the start he kept his promise well enough; but hearing a shout that arose from the crowd as it saw a famous gladiator fall, he opened his eyes; he opened them and he

could not shut them. From that moment and until the time of his conversion he was one of the most ardent spectators of the games of the arena.

I am ashamed to quote myself after so great a saint; still, you know that I have not the tastes of an anthropophagus. The first time that I went to the circus at Madrid I was afraid that I should not be able to endure the sight of the blood that they shed so freely; I was especially afraid that my sensitiveness, which I mistrusted, would make me seem ridiculous in the eyes of the hardened lovers of the sport who had invited me to their box. But not at all! The first bull that appeared was killed: I had no further thought of going out. Two hours passed without the slightest intermission, and I was not yet tired. No tragedy had ever interested me so intensely. During my stay in Spain I have not missed a single fight, and, though I blush to admit it, I like fights to the death better than those in which they merely torment bulls who have balls on the end of their horns. There is the same difference as between combats *à l'outrance* and tournaments with blunted lances. However, the two kinds of combat are very much alike except that in the second the danger to the men is almost *nil.*

The celebration begins the day before a fight. In order to avoid accidents the bulls are taken to the stable of the circus (*encierro*) after nightfall, and the day before the date arranged for the fight they are put out to pasture in a field not far from Madrid (*el arroyo*). It is considered worth while to take the time and trouble to go out to see these bulls, which often come from a great distance. A large number of carriages, gentlemen on horseback and pedestrians go to the arroyo. Many young men wear upon this occasion the elegant costume of an Andalusian *majo* * and display a magnificence and luxury which the simplicity of our ordinary attire quite debars. Moreover this outing is not without danger; the bulls are not fastened, the men in charge have difficulty in making themselves obeyed, and onlookers have to be on their guard to avoid being attacked by the bulls.

There are arenas (plazas) in almost all the large cities of Spain. These edifices are of very simple, not to say rude construction. As a rule they are merely great wooden stands, and the amphitheatre at Ronda is spoken of as a marvel because it is entirely built of stone. It is the finest in Spain, just as the Castle of Thunderten-

* A dandy of the lower classes.

Tronkh was the finest in Westphalia, because it had a door and windows. But what matters the decoration of a theatre if the play be good?

The amphitheatre at Madrid can accommodate about seven thousand spectators, who are enabled to come in and go out without confusion, by the numerous doors which are provided. The spectators sit on wooden, or stone benches;* a few boxes have chairs. That of His Catholic Majesty is the only one fitted out with any considerable degree of elegance.

The arena is surrounded by a strong palisade, about five and a half feet high. Two feet from the ground, all the way around on both sides of the palisade, there is a wooden ledge, a sort of foothold or stirrup, by means of which the toreador, when he is pursued, can more easily leap over the barriers. A narrow passageway separates this barrier from the seats of the spectators, which are raised as high as the barrier, and further protected by a double cord, held in place by strong stakes. This precaution dates from only a few years back. A bull had not only leaped over the barrier, which frequently happens, but it crashed on up to the seats—where it killed and wounded a number of onlookers.

*For the last few years all the benches have been of stone.

This cord which is stretched around is deemed sufficient to prevent the recurrence of a similar accident.

Four doors open into the arena. One communicates withthe bulls' stable (*toril*); the other leads to the slaughter house (*matadero*), where the bulls are skinned and cut up. The two others are used by the human actors in this tragedy.

A little while before the fight, the toreadors meet in a hall adjoining the arena. Near by are the horses' stables. Farther on there is an infirmary. A surgeon and a priest are in attendance.

The hall which serves as a *foyer* is adorned with a picture of the Madonna, before which burn some candles; beneath it is a table with a little brazier containing glowing charcoal. Each toreador as he enters takes off his hat before the painting, hastily mutters some snatch of a prayer, then takes a cigar out of his pocket, lights it at the brazier, and smokes and chats with his companions and the sportsmen who have come to talk over with them the points of the bulls they are to meet.

At the same time, in an inner court, the horsemen, who are to fight on horseback, make ready for the fray by exercising their horses. With this end in view they charge full gallop at a

wall, which they strike with a long pole in place of a pikestaff; without removing their poles from this point of contact they train their horses to turn as rapidly and as close to the wall as possible. You will see presently that this drill is not without its use. The horses used are worn-out army hacks which are bought very cheaply. Before entering the arena, lest they should be frightened by the shouts of the throng, they are blindfolded, and their ears are stopped up with dampened wads.

The arena presents a very animated appearance. Long before the hour of the fight it has been packed with spectators, and the benches and boxes show a confused mass of heads. There are two kinds of seats; those on the shady side are the dearest and most comfortable; but the sunny side is always filled with intrepid enthusiasts. Far fewer women are to be seen than men, and those present are for the most part *manolos* (women of the town). In the boxes, however, are to be seen some elegant gowns, but very few young women.* For some time French and English novels have been perverting the ideas of Spanish women, and lessening their respect for their ancient customs. I do not believe that the clergy are forbidden to attend

* The contrary holds true to-day.

these spectacles; yet I have seen only one priest present in clerical garb. I have been told that several go in disguise.

Upon a signal from the president of the contest an *alguazil mayor,* accompanied by two *alguazils* in Crispin costume, all three on horseback, and followed by a troop of horsemen, clears out the arena and the narrow passageway which separates it from the seats. When they have withdrawn, a herald, escorted by a notary and some other alguazils on foot, comes to the middle of the enclosure and reads a notice forbidding the spectators to throw anything into the arena, to disturb the combatants by signs or cries, etc. Scarcely has he appeared when, in spite of the dignified formula: "In the name of our Sovereign the King, whom may the Lord long preserve" . . . an outburst of shouts and whistling is heard from all sides and continues during the whole reading of the order, which moreover is never observed. At the circus, and there alone, the people hold sovereign sway and can do and say what they will.*

There are two principal classes of toreadors: the *picadors* who fight on horseback, armed with a lance, and the *chulos* on foot who torment the

* Since the re-establishment of the constitution this notice from His Majesty the King is no longer read.

bulls by waving bright coloured cloths in front of them. Amongst the latter are the *banderilleros* and the *matadors,* about whom I shall speak to you presently. All wear Andalusian costumes, very much like that of Figaro in *Le Barbier de Seville,* but instead of silk knickerbockers and stockings, the picadors have trousers of heavy leather studded with wood and iron to protect their legs and thighs from the horns of the bulls. When afoot they walk with their legs spread out like compasses, and if they are overthrown they can scarcely get up again without help from the chulos. Their saddles are very high, shaped like Turkish saddles, with stirrups like wooden shoes completely covering the foot. In order to make their nags obey, their spurs have sharp teeth two inches long. Their lance is thick and strong, ending in a very sharp iron spike; but as the pleasure must be made to last as long as possible this spike is provided with a cord pad, which allows the iron to penetrate only one inch into the body of the bull.

One of the alguazils catches in his hat a key which the President of the games throws to him. This key opens nothing; nevertheless he carries it to the man whose business it is to open the toril, and makes off at full gallop, followed by the shouts of the multitude, who call to him that

the bull is already outside and is pursuing him. This joke is repeated at every fight.

In the mean time the picadors have taken their places. There are usually two on horseback in the arena; two or three others are in waiting outside ready to take the place of the others in case of accident such as death, a severe fracture, etc. A dozen chulos are stationed about, within reach to help each other.

The bull, previously irritated in his cage, comes out in a rage. Usually he reaches the middle of the enclosure at a bound, and there stops short, astonished at the noise which he hears, and the spectacle which he sees around him. Upon the nape of his neck he wears a bow of ribbons, fastened into his skin by a little hook. The colour of the ribbons indicates from what herd (*vacada*) he has been taken, but a practised sportsman recognises at a single glance to what province and breed the animal belongs.

The chulos approach, wave their bright coloured mantles, and try to lure the bull toward one of the picadors. If the animal is brave it attacks without a moment's hesitation. The picador, keeping his horse well in hand, has placed himself with his lance under his arm exactly in front of the bull; he seizes upon the moment

when the bull lowers its head, ready to strike with its horns, to give it a blow with his lance on the nape of the neck and *nowhere else.**

He throws the whole weight of his body into the blow, and at the same time turns his horse off to the left, so as to have the bull on his right. If all these movements are well carried out, if the picador is strong, and his horse is quick to respond, the bull, carried on by its own impetus, passes without touching him. Then it is the duty of the chulos to take up the bull's attention so as to give the picador time to get out of the way; but often the animal recognises too well the person by whom it has been wounded; it turns quickly, outruns the horse, buries its horns in the unfortunate animal's flank, and overturns horse and rider. The latter is at once relieved by the chulos; some lift him up, others, by throwing their capes at the head of the bull, turn it aside and bring it toward them, then make their escape by running to the barriers and climbing over with the most astonishing agility. Spanish bulls run as quickly as a horse, and if a chulo

* One day I saw a picador thrown from his horse and just about to be killed if his companion had not freed him, and made the bull draw back by striking it on the nose. The circumstance made the deed excusable—nevertheless I heard all lovers of the sport cry out: "Shame! shame! a lance thrust on the nose! That man should be thrown out of the arena."

were very far from the railing he would have great difficulty in escaping. So it is very seldom indeed that the horseman, whose life depends upon the skill of the chulos, ventures toward the middle of the arena; when he does so, it is considered a most extraordinary display of courage.

Once more on his feet the picador immediately mounts his horse again, if he can succeed in getting it up too. It matters little if the poor creature is losing streams of blood, if its entrails are dragging on the ground and entangled in its legs; as long as a horse can stand on its feet it must face the bull. If the horse can not be got up on its feet, the toreador leaves the arena, and comes back at once, mounted on a fresh horse.

I have already said that the lance thrust can wound a bull only very slightly and has merely the effect of irritating the beast. However, the shock of running against horse and rider, its own exertions, especially the strain of bracing itself to a sudden stop, tires the bull soon enough. Often, too, the pain of the lance thrusts discourages it, and then it no longer dares attack the horses, or, in the parlance of the bull ring, it refuses to enter. In the mean time if it is vigorous, it has by this time killed four or five horses.

The picadors then take a breathing space and a signal is given to use the banderillas.

Banderillas are sticks about two and a half feet long covered with cut-out paper, and ending in a sharp end, which is barbed in order that it may remain in the wound. The chulos hold one of these darts in each hand. The surest way of using them is to creep up quietly behind the bull, then to suddenly startle it by striking the banderillas loudly together. The bull turns around in surprise and attacks its enemy without a moment's hesitation. When the bull has almost reached him, just as it lowers its head to make a charge, the chulo buries the points of the two banderillas in each side of the animal's neck, which can only be done by standing for a moment face to face with the bull, and almost between its horns; then he slips away, lets it go by, and runs to the railing in order to reach a place of safety. A slight distraction, a start of hesitation or fear, would be enough to cause his destruction. Connoisseurs, however, consider the part of the banderillas the least dangerous of all. If by accident he falls as he is planting his banderillas in the animal's neck he should not try to get up again; he lies motionless in the spot where he falls. A bull very rarely strikes on the ground, not from generosity, but because

in charging it shuts its eyes and passes over the man without seeing him. Sometimes it stops, however, and snuffs at him, as if to make sure that he is really dead; then drawing back a few paces it lowers its head to lift him on its horns; but then the chulo's comrades surround it, and so completely occupy its attention that it is compelled to abandon the feigned corpse.

When the bull has shown itself cowardly, that is to say when it has not spiritedly received four lance thrusts, that is the regulation number, the spectators, sovereign judges, condemn it by acclamation to a sort of torture which is at the same time a punishment and a means of arousing its ire. On all sides the cry is raised "*Fuego! Fuego!*" (Fire! Fire!). Then they distribute to the chulos in place of their usual weapons banderillas which have handles surrounded by fireworks. The point is fitted with a piece of lighted tinder. As soon as it enters the hide the tinder is pushed back against the wick of the fuses. They take fire and the flame, which is directed toward the bull, burns into its flesh, and makes it leap and bound in a way which proves extremely amusing to the public. It is really a wonderful sight to see this enormous animal foaming with rage, shaking the blazing banderillas and tossing itself about in the midst

of flame and smoke. In spite of the opinion of the poets I must say that of all the animals I have observed, not one has less expression in its eyes than the bull. I should rather say changes less in expression: for it has always the same look of brutal and sullen stupidity. Rarely does it give voice to its agony by groans: wounds irritate and frighten it: but never, if you will pardon the expression, does it seem to consider its fate; it never weeps like the stag. So it can awaken pity only when it has made itself conspicuous by its courage.*

When the bull is carrying in his neck two or three pairs of banderillas it is time to finish with him. A roll of drums is heard; immediately one of the chulos (the matador), who has been selected beforehand, advances from the midst of a group of comrades. Richly clothed, covered with gold and silk, he holds a long sword, and a scarlet mantle fastened to a rod, so that he can handle it more readily. This is called *la muleta.* He advances before the President's box, and, with a profound bow, asks permission to kill the bull. This formality is gone through only once for

* Sometimes and upon important occasions the staff of the banderilla is wrapped around with a net in which are imprisoned little live birds. The point of the banderilla, as it is buried in the bull's neck, cuts the knot which closes the net, and the birds escape after having struggled for a long time around the animal's ears.

the whole fight. The President, of course, replies in the affirmative, with a nod. Then the matador shouts a *viva,* pirouettes about, throws his hat on the ground, and goes to meet the bull.

In these fights there are rules to be observed, as well as in duels; to break them would be as infamous as to kill an adversary by treachery. For instance, a matador may only strike a bull at the point where its neck joins its back, what the Spaniards call the *cross.* The blow must be struck from above, *en seconde* so to speak; never from below. It were a thousand times better to lose one's life than to strike a bull from below, on the side, or from behind. The sword which the matador uses is long, strong, and two-edged; the handle is very strong and ends in a ball which is held against the palm of the hand. It takes long practice and a particular skill to be able to use this weapon.

In order to successfully kill a bull one must thoroughly understand its nature. Upon this knowledge depends not only the glory but also the life of the matador. As can be easily imagined, bulls differ as greatly in character as do men; however, they can be divided into two distinct classes: the *clear* and the *obscure.* I am using here the language of the ring. The clear attack openly; the obscure on the contrary

are tricky and try to take their man by treachery. These latter are extremely dangerous.

By trying to give the bull the sword thrust the matador waves the muleta before it, excites it, and observes carefully if it openly rushes upon the muleta as soon as noticed, or if it comes up quietly in order to gain ground, and to attack its adversary only when it seems too close to avoid the encounter. Often one sees a bull shake its head menacingly, paw the earth without being willing to advance, or even slowly draw back, trying to draw the man toward the middle of the ring where he could not escape. Others, instead of charging in a straight line, approach obliquely, slowly, and feigning fatigue; but as soon as they have measured their distance they charge like a flash.

For anyone who understands somewhat, it is an interesting sight to observe the advances of the matador and the bull, who, like two skilful generals, seem to guess each other's intention, and change their movements at any moment. A turn of the head, a side glance, the lowering of an ear, are for the experienced matador so many not uncertain indications of his enemy's intentions. At last the bull, enraged, hurls itself at the flag with which the matador intentionally covers himself. Its strength is such that it would

break down a wall with its horns; but the man lightly slips aside; disappears as though by enchantment and leaves only the light drapery which he lifts above its horns, defying its fury. The impetuosity of the bull carries it away past its adversary; it stops suddenly, stiffening its legs, and these sudden and violent reactions tire it so greatly that if this tactic is prolonged, it in itself is sufficient to kill the bull. So Romero, the famous professor, says that a good matador should kill eight bulls with seven blows; one of the eight will die from fatigue and rage.

After several passes, when the matador thinks he understands his antagonist, he prepares to strike the final blow. Planting himself firmly on his feet he places himself in front of the bull and standing perfectly still awaits it, at a proper distance. His right arm, armed with the sword, is bent up on a level with his head; the left, stretched forward, holds the muleta almost touching the ground, and so inciting the bull to lower its head. At this moment the matador deals the death blow, with all the strength of his arm, augmented by the weight of his body and the impetus of the bull itself. The sword, which is three feet long, is often buried to the hilt, and if the blow is well directed the man has nothing more to fear; the bull stops short; the blood flows

scantily; it raises its head; its muzzle twitches, and suddenly it falls in a heavy mass. Immediately there arises from all the tiers of benches a deafening thunder of Viva! handkerchiefs are waved; the hats of majos fly into the ring, and the victorious hero modestly kisses his hand in all directions.

It is said that in former times only one blow was given; but everything has degenerated and now it is very rare that a bull falls at the first blow. If, however, it seems mortally wounded the matador does not redouble; helped by the chulos he makes it go round in a circle exciting it with mantles so as to daze it for a short time. As soon as it falls a chulo finishes it with a fierce dagger thrust on neck; the animal expires immediately.

It has been noticed that nearly all bulls have a spot in the circus to which they always return. This is called the *querencia.* Usually it is the door by which they enter the ring.

Often one sees a bull with the fatal sword buried up to the hilt in its neck, cross the ring slowly, disdaining the chulos and their draperies with which they are pursuing it. The animal's one thought now is to die in peace. Seeking the spot for which it has shown a preference, it kneels there, lies down, stretches out its neck

and quietly dies, unless a thrust from a dagger does not come to hasten the end.

If the bull refuses to make an attack the matador runs up to it, and always just at the moment when the animal lowers its head, pierces it with his sword (estocada di volapié); but if it does not lower its head, or if it persists in running away, it becomes necessary, in order to kill it, to have recourse to a very cruel expedient. A man armed with a long pole tipped with a sharp crescent-shaped blade, treacherously cuts the tendons of the animal's legs from behind; and as soon as it is thrown down, finishes it with a dagger thrust. This is the one episode in these fights which is repugnant to everyone. It is nothing short of an assassination. Fortunately it is seldom necessary to go to such lengths to kill a bull.

A blare of trumpets announces its death. Immediately three mules in harness trot into the ring; a rope is knotted around the bull's horns and to this a hook is fastened, and the mules gallop off with it. Each fight lasts about twenty minutes, and usually eight bulls are killed in an afternoon. If there has been a lack of excitement, at the request of the public, the president of the games will grant one or two additional fights.

You see that the calling of a torero is rather dangerous. In an average year two or three in the whole of Spain die. Very few of them live to an advanced age. If they do not die in the ring, they are obliged to retire from it at an early age, on account of their wounds. The famous Pepe Illo received in his lifetime twenty-six wounds, the last one killed him. The rather high salary of these people is not the only inducement which leads them to enter their dangerous profession. The fame and applause which it wins for them makes them willing to brave death. How sweet it is to triumph before five or six thousand people! So it is not unusual for sportsmen of good family to share the danger and glory of professional toreros. At Seville I saw a Marquis and a Count act as picadors in a public bull-fight.

It is true that the public shows little pity for the toreros. The slightest sign of timidity is punished by shouts and hisses, the most insulting comments pour down from all sides; sometimes even by the order of the spectators, and it is the most terrible mark of their indignation, an alguazil goes up to the toreador, and charges him, upon pain of imprisonment, to attack the bull as quickly as possible.

One day the actor Maïquez, indignant at see-

ing a matador hesitate in the presence of the most "obscure" of all the bulls, heaped insults upon him. "Señor Maïquez," said the matador to him, "don't you know it is not a case here of the kind of lies which you have on the footboards."

The applause which greets them and their desire to make a reputation, or keep that which they have already earned, oblige the toreadors to heighten the dangers to which they are naturally exposed. Pepe Illo, and Romero after him, used to present themselves before the bull with irons on their feet. The presence of mind these men show when confronting the most imminent danger is nothing short of miraculous. Recently a picador named Francisco Sevilla was thrown from his horse and his horse disembowelled by an Andalusian bull of the most remarkable strength and agility. This bull, instead of allowing itself to be diverted by the chulos, pursued the man, trampled him under foot, and repeatedly attacked his legs with its horns, but finding its adversary's legs too well protected by his leather iron-trimmed trousers, it turned about and lowered its head to bury its horns in his chest. Then Sevilla, raising himself by a supreme effort, seized the bull's ear with one hand and buried the fingers of the other in

its nostrils, at the same time keeping his head glued to that of the infuriated beast. In vain did the bull shake him, trample him under foot, thump him against the ground; not once could it make him relax his hold. We watched this uneven contest with our hearts in our mouths. It was the dying agony of a brave man; we almost regretted that it was being prolonged. It was impossible to cry out, to breathe, or to turn away one's eyes from this horrible sight; it lasted almost *two minutes*. At last the bull, overcome by the man in this hand-to-hand conflict, left him in order to follow some chulos. Everyone expected to see Sevilla carried out of the enclosure. They picked him up, but scarcely was he on his feet when he seized a mantle and tried to attract the bull, in spite of his heavy riding boots and his unwieldy leg armour. It was necessary to snatch the mantle out of his hands, otherwise he would have certainly been killed. They brought him a horse; he leaped upon its back boiling with rage, and attacked the bull in the middle of the ring. So terrible was the shock when these two valiant adversaries came together, that horse and bull fell on their knees. Oh! If you could have heard the vivas; if you could have seen the wild joy, the intoxication of the crowd at seeing such courage and

such success, like me, you would have envied the fate of Sevilla! This man has been immortalised in Madrid.

June, 1842.

P. S.—I have just received very sad news. Francisco Sevilla died last year. He died, not in the ring where he should have ended his days, but was carried off by a disease of the liver. He breathed his last at Caravenchel, near those beautiful trees that I so dearly love, far from the public, for which he had so often risked his life.

I had seen him in 1840 in Madrid, as brave, as fool-hardy, as at the time when I wrote the letter you have just read. I saw him again more than twenty times rolling in the dust, under his torn and wounded horse; I saw him break many a lance and fiercely attack the terrible bulls of Gavira. "If Francisco Sevilla had horns," they would say in the arena, "there isn't a toreador who would dare appear before him."

The habitual success which attended him inspired him with the most incredible audacity. When he appeared before a bull he grew indignant because the bull was not afraid of him. "So you don't know me?" he would shout at

him in a rage. And in truth he soon let them know with whom they had to do.

My friends arranged for me the pleasure of dining with Sevilla. He ate and drank like a Homeric hero, and was the jolliest companion one could ask for. His Andalusian manners, his joviality and his patois, with its abundant picturesque metaphors, had a peculiar piquancy in this giant, who seemed to have been created by nature merely to exterminate everything.

A Spanish lady who was fleeing from Madrid when it was being ravaged by cholera, was travelling to Barcelona in the same diligence as Sevilla, who was going to the same town to a bull-fight that had been announced a long time beforehand. During the journey Sevilla was not for a moment lacking in politeness, courtesy and little attentions. When they reached Barcelona the health commissioners, stupid as they always are, told the travellers that there would be a ten days' quarantine for all except Sevilla, whose presence was so strongly desired that sanitary laws did not apply to him; but the generous picador would not hear to this exception, which was so greatly to his advantage. "If this lady and my companions are not to have free passage," he said resolutely, "I will not take part in the fight."

Between the fear of contagion and that of missing a good bull-fight there could not be a moment's hesitation. The commissioners gave way: and they did well, for if they had persisted the population would have burned the station and officials.

Having paid my tribute of praise and regret to the shade of Sevilla, I must speak of another celebrity who reigns to-day without rival in the bull-ring. So little is known in France of what goes on in Spain that there are perhaps on the other side of the Pyrenees persons to whom the name of Montés is still unknown.

All that fame has published of true or of false concerning the classical matadors, Pepe Illo, and Pablo Romero, is exemplified every Monday in the National Circus, as they now call it. Courage, grace, coolness, marvellous skill—he unites them all. His presence in the ring enlivens, transports actors and spectators. There are no longer bad bulls, timid chulos. Each one outdoes himself. Toreadors of doubtful courage become heroes when Montés leads them, for they know that with him no one runs any risk. A single gesture from him is enough to turn aside the most infuriated bull, just as it is about to run through a prostrate picador with its horns. Never has the *media luna* been seen in the ring

where Montés fights. Clear, obscure, all bulls are good fighters with him. He fascinates them, he transforms them, he kills them when and as it pleases him. He is the first matador whom I have seen *gallear el toro,* that is to say, turns his back on the enraged animal, and lets it pass under his arm. He scarcely deigns to turn his head when the bull rushes at him. Sometimes, throwing a cloak over his shoulder he crosses the ring followed by the bull; the beast in a fury pursues him without being able to reach him, and yet it is so near Montés that each time it charges, its horns raise an end of the cloak. So great is the confidence which Montès inspires, that for the spectators all idea of danger has disappeared, and their only feeling is one of admiration.

Montés is said to hold opinions not at all favourable to the present order of things. They say that he has been a stiff royalist: that he is *a shrimp* (cangrejo), that is to say a moderate. If good patriots regret this they can not avoid sharing the general enthusiasm. I have seen *descalzos* (ragamuffins) throw their hats to him in an ecstasy and beg him to put it on his head for an instant. There are 16th century ways for you! Brantôme says somewhere: "I have known many gentlemen who before wearing

their silk stockings begged their ladies to put them on, and wear them first for eight or ten days, more or less; and then they themselves wore them with great veneration and great contentment of body and mind."

Montés has the bearing of a man of good breeding. He lives luxuriously and devotes himself to his family, for whose future he has provided by his talent. His aristocratic manners give offence to some toreadors who are jealous of him. I remember he declined our invitation to dinner when we entertained Sevilla. Upon this occasion Sevilla gave us his opinion of Montés with his usual frankness. *Montés no fue realista; es buen companero, luciente matador, atiende á los picadores pero es un p——*"
Which means that he wears a frockcoat outside the bull-ring, that he never frequents drinking places, and that he is altogether too well-bred.

Sevilla is the Marius of the bull-ring, Montés is the Cæsar.

II

VALENCIA, *November* 15, 1830.

SIR: After having given you a description of the bull-fights, there remains but one thing for me to do, if I am to follow the admirable

rule of the puppet shows, "always going on from good to better"—and that is to tell you about an execution. I have just seen one, and I will give you an account of it, if you have the courage to read what I say.

In the first place I must tell you why I was present at an execution. In a foreign country you feel obliged to see everything, and you are always afraid that, from some momentary lack of energy or indifference, you may miss some unusual custom peculiar to the country. Moreover, the history of the unfortunate wretch who was hung had aroused my interest; I wished to see his physiognomy; and lastly I was very glad to test my nerves.

Here is the history of my man who was hung (I forgot to inquire what his name was). He was a peasant from round about Valencia, respected and feared for his boldness and daring. In his village he was cock of the walk. There was no one who danced better, who could throw the bar of iron farther, who knew more songs of the olden days. He was not given to quarrelling, but it was well known that it required very little to rouse him to anger. If he accompanied travellers, with his carbine on his shoulder, not a single robber would dare to stop them, though they carried valises filled with golden

doubloons. And it was a sight that gladdened the eyes to see this young man with his velvet cloak thrown over his shoulder, strutting through the streets, and lolling about with an air of conscious superiority. In a word, he was a majo in the full force of the term. A majo is one who is, at the same time, a dandy of the lower class, and a person who is exceedingly sensitive as to his personal honour.

The Castilians have a proverb which they quote to the discredit of the Valencians, a proverb which in my opinion is utterly false. It runs as follows: "In Valencia the meat is grass; the grass, water—the men are women, and the women—nothing." I can certify that the cuisine of Valencia is excellent, and that the women there are extremely pretty, and fairer than in any other province in Spain. You shall see what manner of men they have in that country.

A bull-fight was being given. The majo had not a real in his pocket. He was counting that a royalist volunteer who was on duty that day would let him go in free. But not at all. The volunteer was inflexible in carrying out his orders. The majo insisted, the volunteer persisted, mutual recriminations. At last the volunteer thrust the claimant back roughly with a blow in the stomach from the butt of his

gun. The majo withdrew; but all those who noticed his clenched fists, the pallor which overspread his countenance, his dilated and quivering nostrils, and the expression of his eyes—all such were convinced that some evil would be the outcome of this encounter.

Fifteen days later the brutal volunteer was dispatched with a detachment in pursuit of some smugglers. They slept in a lonely inn (*venta*). In the night a voice was heard calling: "Open the door, I have a message from your wife." The volunteer went down half-dressed—scarcely had he opened the door when the discharge from a blunderbuss set fire to his shirt and discharged a dozen balls into his breast. The murderer disappeared—who fired the shot? No one could guess. Certainly it was not the majo who killed him, for a dozen women can be found who are pious and good royalists, and who can swear by the name of their patron saint, and kissing their thumbs, that they all saw the above mentioned, each one in her own particular village, at exactly the hour and minute at which the crime was committed.

And the majo showed himself with the open and serene countenance of a man who has just freed himself from some carking care. So it is that men show themselves at Tortonio's the even-

ing after a duel, when they have bravely broken the arm of someone who has offended their dignity. Pray notice in passing that assassination is the duel of poor people; a form of duel which is far more serious than ours, since it is generally followed by two deaths, while gentlemen in good society scratch much oftener than kill each other.

All went well, until a certain alguazil, in an excess of zeal (according to some because he had just been appointed to office—according to others, because he was in love with a woman who preferred the majo) took into his head to try to arrest this amiable person. So long as he confined himself to threats his rival merely laughed; but when at last he really tried to lay hands on him, he made him swallow an *ox-tongue* —which is their expression for a knife-cut. Does lawful self-defence authorise one to thus make vacant the place of an alguazil?

Alguazils are greatly respected in Spain, almost as much so as constables in England. The penalty of maltreating an alguazil is hanging. So the majo was seized, thrown into prison, and condemned after a very long trial; for the forms of justice are even longer than with us.

If you take a moderately charitable view of the case, you will agree with me that this man did not deserve his fate, that he was the victim

of an unhappy fatality, and that without too greatly burdening their consciences the judges might have given him back to the society of which he was born to be the ornament (language of the bar). But judges seldom give place to these noble and poetical sentiments; they unanimously condemned him to death.

One evening as I happened to pass the market-place, I noticed some workmen who, by torch-light, were raising some posts which were curiously fitted together, forming something like the shape of a **T**. A group of soldiers were lined up in a circle, and kept back the over-curious onlookers, for the following reason: The gallows (for such the structure proved to be) is raised by statute labour, and the workmen who are pressed into service, can not, without making themselves guilty of rebellion, refuse to render this service. So by way of compensation the public authorities see to it that they are allowed to do almost in secret this work, which public opinion looks upon as disgraceful. To this end they are surrounded by soldiers who keep off the crowd, and they work only by night; so that it is impossible to recognise them, and they do not run the risk of being called " gallows builders " the next day.

At Valencia an old Gothic tower serves as

prison. It is a rather fine piece of architecture, especially the façade which overlooks the river. It is situated at one end of the city, and is at the same time one of its chief gates. It goes by the name of "La Puerta de los Serranos." From the flat roof on the top of it one has a view of the Guadalaviar, the fine bridges which cross it, the walks about Valencia, and the smiling country around about. Gazing upon fair fields must be rather a sad pleasure when one is shut up between four walls; but after all it *is* a pleasure, and one should be grateful to the jailer who allows the prisoners to go up to this flat roof. To captives even the smallest pleasures are sweet.

From this very prison the doomed man was to issue, and mounted on a donkey, make his way through the busiest streets of the city to the market-place, where he would take leave of this world.

In good time I found myself before La Puerta de los Serranos, with one of my Spanish friends who was good enough to accompany me. I expected to find a considerable crowd gathered together since early morning; but I was mistaken. Artisans were quietly working in their shops, peasants were leaving the city after having sold their vegetables. There was nothing

to give notice that anything extraordinary was to take place, except a dozen dragoons drawn up near the prison. The lack of eagerness shown by the Valencians to see executions is not, I think, to be attributed to an excess of delicacy of feeling on their part. But neither am I sure that I should believe, with my guide, that they have become so indifferent to this spectacle from often witnessing it, that it has lost all attraction for them. Possibly this indifference arises from the industrious habits of the Valencians. Love of work and gain distinguishes them not only from all the rest of the population of Spain, but also from the rest of Europe.

At eleven o'clock the prison door opened. Immediately a somewhat numerous procession of Franciscans came forward. They were preceded by a great crucifix carried by a penitent, escorted by two acolytes, each with a lantern hung at the end of a pole. The life-sized crucifix was of pasteboard painted in the most extraordinarily natural way. The Spaniards, who try to make religion as terrible as possible, really excel in depicting the wounds, bruises and marks of tortures suffered by their martyrs. Upon this crucifix, which was to figure at an execution, neither blood, stripes, nor livid swellings had been spared. It was the most hideous piece of

anatomy imaginable. The man who carried this horrible figure had stopped outside the gate. The soldiers had drawn a little nearer, about a hundred onlookers had grouped themselves behind, near enough to lose nothing of what would be said or done, when the condemned prisoner appeared, accompanied by his confessor.

Never shall I forget the man's face. He was very tall and thin and looked about thirty years old. His forehead was high, his hair thick, black as jet, and straight as the bristles of a brush, his great eyes, deep sunk in his head, seemed to send forth flames. His feet were bare, and he was clad in a long black robe on which had been sewn over the heart, a blue and red cross. Such are the insignia of the dying. The collar of his shirt, plaited like a ruff, fell over his shoulders and his breast. A slender whitish cord, which stood out clearly against the black of his robe, was passed several times around his body, and by a series of complicated knots, fastened his arms and hands in the attitude of prayer. In his hands he held a little crucifix and an image of the Virgin. His confessor was coarse-featured, short, fat, with a florid face. He looked like a good man, but like a man who had long been engaged in just such work and who had seen many others in the same position. Be-

hind the condemned prisoner stood a pale, weak, slender man, with a gentle and timid-looking face. He wore a brown coat, black breeches and stockings. I should have taken him for a notary, or alguazil in undress uniform, had it not been that he was wearing a wide-brimmed grey hat such as the picadors wear at bull-fights. Upon seeing the crucifix he respectfully took off his hat, and I noticed then a little ivory ladder fastened to the crown, like a cockade. He was the hangman.

As he put his head outside the gate, the prisoner, who had been obliged to stoop to pass under the wicket, drew himself up to his full height, opened his eyes staring wide, hastily scanned the crowd and drew a deep breath. It seemed to me that he breathed the air with pleasure, like one who had been long shut up in some narrow and close-smelling cell. His expression was strange. It was not one of fear, but rather of uneasiness. He seemed resigned. No surliness, nor air of bravado. I said to myself that in similar circumstances I would wish to show as good a countenance.

His confessor told him to kneel before the crucifix; he obeyed, and kissed the feet of that hideous image. At that moment, all those present were moved by the sight and maintained a

profound silence. The confessor, noticing it, raised his hands to free them from the long sleeves which would have impeded him in his oratorical gestures, and began to deliver a discourse which had probably served him more than once before. His voice was strong and accentuated, but nevertheless monotonous by reason of a periodical repetition of the same intonations. He pronounced every word clearly, his accent was pure and he spoke good Castilian, which the prisoner perhaps understood only very imperfectly. He began each sentence in a shrill voice rising to falsetto, but ended in a grave low voice.

In substance, he said to the prisoner whom he called his brother: "You have truly deserved death, indeed great indulgence has been shown you in that you have been merely condemned to the gallows; for your crimes are very great." At this point he said only a word or two about the murders committed: but he spoke at great length on the ungodliness in which the penitent had spent his youth, and which alone had driven him to destruction. Then, warming little by little to his subject: "But what is this well-deserved punishment which you are going to suffer here, compared with the untold sufferings which your Divine Saviour endured for you? Look

at this blood, these wounds, etc." A long detailed enumeration of all the sufferings of the Passion, described with all the exaggeration befitting the Spanish language, and illustrated by means of the ugly crucifix of which I have spoken. The peroation was better than the exordium. He said, but at much too great length, that God's mercy is infinite, and that real repentance can turn away his anger.

The prisoner arose, looked at the priest with a rather sullen air: "Father, it was enough to tell me that I am going to glory: come, let us move on."

The confessor withdrew into the prison, well pleased with his sermon. Two Franciscans took his place beside the condemned prisoner; they were not to leave him until the last moment.

First of all they stretched him out on a mat which the hangman drew a little toward himself, but not at all roughly, as if by a common consent between the sufferer and the executioner. It was a mere form in order to carry out the letter of the clause which reads: "Hung after having been dragged over wattles."

This done the unfortunate wretch was hoisted upon an ass, which the hangman led by the halter. By his side walked the two Franciscans, preceded by two long lines of the monks of this

order, and lay-brothers belonging to the Brotherhood of the Desamparados. Banners and crosses were not forgotten. Behind the ass came a notary and two alguazils in black French coats, breeches and silk-stockings, swords at their sides, and mounted on wretched nags with miserable trappings. A picket of cavalry brought up the rear. While the procession very slowly advanced the monks chanted the litany in low tones, and men in cloaks circulated around the cortège, holding out silver plates to the onlookers, and asking alms for the poor unfortunate (*por el pobre*). This money is used for masses for the repose of his soul, and to a good Catholic who is going to be hung, it must be a consolation to see the plate rapidly filling with great round pennies. Every one gives something. Impious as I am, I gave my offering with a feeling of utmost respect.

In truth I like these Catholic ceremonies, and I should be glad to believe in them. On this occasion they have the advantage of impressing the crowd much more deeply than our cart, our gendarmes, and the petty and ignoble cortège which in France accompanies executions. Moreover, and it is particularly for this reason that I like these crosses and processions, all the ceremony must greatly contribute to soften the last

moments of the condemned. This mournful pomp flatters his vanity, the last sentiment to die out within us. Then these monks whom he has revered since his childhood, and who pray for him, all must bewilder and benumb him, take up his attention and keep him from thinking of the fate that awaits him. If he turns his head to the right the Franciscan on that side speaks to him of the infinite mercy of God. On the left, another Franciscan is ready to extol the powerful intercession of our Lord. He goes to his punishment like a recruit between two officers who keep watch upon and exhort him. "He has not a moment's quiet!" the philosopher will cry. All the better. The continual excitement in which he is kept hinders him from giving himself up to his own thoughts which would torment him far more.

Then it was that I understood why the monks, and especially those mendicant orders, exert so great an influence on the lower classes. If I may say it without giving offence to the intolerant liberals, they are in reality the support and consolation of the unfortunates from the day of their birth until the day of their death. What a horrible task, for instance, is this: to converse for three days with a man who is going to be put to death. I believe that if I had the

misfortune to be hung I should be very glad to have two Franciscans to talk to me.

The route which the procession followed was exceedingly winding, in order that they might go through the wider streets. With my guide I went the shortest way, so that we could again see the condemned man as he passed. I noticed that in the interval between the time of his leaving the prison, and the time of his reaching the street where I again saw him he had become considerably bent over. He was shrivelling up little by little. His head, as if it were merely supported by the skin of his neck, had fallen forward on his breast. Nevertheless I did not notice on his countenance an expression of fear. He gazed fixedly at the crucifix which he held between his hands, and if he turned away his eyes, it was to look upon the two Franciscans to whom he seemed to listen with interest.

Then I would have withdrawn, but I was urged to go to the open square, and to go into a merchant's house, where I should have full liberty to watch the hanging from the high balcony, or to withdraw from the spectacle by going back into the apartment. So I went.

The square was far from being filled. The women selling fruit and herbs did not put themselves out in the slightest. One could move

about freely. The gallows, surmounted by the arms of Aragon, was erected in front of a fine Moorish building—the Silk Exchange (la Lonja de Seda). The market-place is long. The houses around it are small, but top-heavy with many stories; each row of windows has its iron balcony. In the distance they look like great cages. A considerable number of them were quite unoccupied by spectators.

In the balcony where I was to take my place I found two young girls of from sixteen to seventeen, comfortably ensconced in chairs, and fanning themselves in the most comfortable manner imaginable. Both were very pretty, and from their very neat black silk dresses, their satin slippers, and their lace-trimmed mantillas, I judged that they were the daughters of some middle-class family in easy circumstances. I was confirmed in this opinion, because although they used in speaking together the Valencian dialect, still they understood and spoke Spanish very correctly.

In one corner of the square, a little chapel had been erected. This chapel and the gallows, which were not far separated, were enclosed in a great hollow square formed by some royalist volunteers and troops of the line.

The soldiers opened their ranks to allow the

procession to enter, the prisoner was taken down from his donkey, and led before the altar of which I have just spoken; the monks were gathered around him; he was on his knees and repeatedly kissed the steps of the altar. I do not know what they were saying to him. In the meantime the hangman was examining the rope and his ladder. When this scrutiny was finished he approached the victim, who was still kneeling, put his hand on his shoulder, and as is the custom, said to him: "Brother, the time has come."

All the monks save one had left him, and the hangman was apparently put in charge of his victim. As he led him to the ladder (or rather wooden stairway) he was careful to shield the prisoner from seeing the gallows, by holding before his eyes his wide-brimmed hat. But the condemned man seemed to be trying to push away the hat, with his head, wishing to show that he had courage enough to look upon the instrument of his torture.

The bells were ringing noon, when the hangman went up the fatal stairway, drawing after him the condemned criminal, who went up only with great difficulty because he was walking backward. The stairs were wide and provided with a handrail on one side only. The monk was

on the side of the handrail, the hangman and the victim went up on the other. The monk was speaking continually and with many gestures. When they reached the top of the stairs, at the moment when the executioner with extraordinary rapidity passed the rope around the neck of his victim, the monk, so they say, made him repeat the creed. Then raising his voice, he cried: "Brethren, unite your prayers with those of this poor sinner." I heard a soft voice beside me say in a moved tone, "Amen." I turned my head and I saw one of my pretty Valencian girls, who with heightened colour was fanning herself in perceptible agitation. She was looking attentively toward the gallows. I turned my eyes in the same direction: the monk was coming down the stairs, and the condemned man was hanging in the air, the hangman on his shoulders and an attendant pulling his feet.

P. S.—I do not know if your patriotism will pardon my partiality for Spain. Since we are by way of discussing punishments, I will tell you that if I like Spanish executions better than ours, I also greatly prefer their galleys to those in which we place every year some twelve hundred rascals. Please notice that I am not speaking of the African *presidios,* which I have not seen. At Toledo, Seville, Grenada, and Cadiz

I have seen a large number of *presidarios* (galley-prisoners) who did not seem particularly wretched. They were working at making or mending the roads. They were badly enough dressed; but on their faces was not written that black despair which I have noticed on the faces of our galley-slaves at home. They ate out of great caldrons *a puchero* like that of the soldiers who were guarding them, and afterward they smoked their cigar in the shade. But what has especially pleased me here, is that they are not shunned as they are in France. The reason is simple: in France any man who has been in the galleys has stolen, or done worse. In Spain, on the contrary, very worthy persons, at different epochs, have been condemned to pass their lives there, because they held opinions displeasing to those who governed them. Although the number of these political victims is infinitely small, it is quite sufficient to change public opinion in regard to all galley-prisoners. It is better to treat a rascal well than to show a lack of courtesy toward a gentleman. So they give them lights for their cigars, and call them "my friend,"—"comrade." Those in charge of them do not make them feel that they belong to an inferior order of beings.

If this letter does not seem to you already

most unduly long I shall tell you of a little incident which befell me a short time ago, and which will serve to illustrate the bearing of the people toward the presidarios.

As I was leaving Grenada on my way to Baylen I met on the way a tall man who was wearing *alpargates,* and walking along with a good military stride. He was followed by a little spaniel. His clothes were of an unusual cut and totally different from those of the peasants whom I had met. Although my horse was trotting he followed me without difficulty and opened a conversation with me. We were soon good friends. My guide called him "Monsieur," "Your Grace" (*Usted*). They talked together about a Mr. So and So of Grenada who commanded the presidio and whom they both knew. When lunch-time came we halted at a house where we were able to get some wine. The man with the dog drew a piece of salt cod-fish out of a bag and offered it to me. I suggested that we share our luncheons, and we all three ate with a hearty appetite. I must even admit to you that we all drank from the same bottle, for the excellent reason that it would have been impossible to find a glass within a league. He told me that he was travelling merely on account of the dog and that his commandant

was sending him to Jaen that he might deliver it to one of his friends. Seeing him without uniform and hearing him speak of his commandant, I said: "You must be a soldier of the guard, then?" "No, I am presidario." I was a little surprised. "How could you fail to see it from his uniform," asked my guide?

Moreover, the attitude of this man who was an honest muleteer did not change the least in the world. He offered the bottle to me first, out of deference to my position of *cabellero;* then he offered it to the convict, and drank after him; in short, he treated him with all the politeness which the lower classes show among themselves in Spain. "But why were you sent to the galleys?" I asked my travelling companion.

"Oh! sir, it was a bit of bad luck. I was mixed up with several deaths." (*Fué por una desgracia. Me hallé la unes muertas.*) "How in the world?"

"I'll tell you how it happened. I was a soldier of the guard. With some twenty of my comrades I was escorting a gang of convicts from Valencia. On the way their friends tried to set them free, and at the same time our prisoners rebelled. Our captain was in a tight place. If the prisoners escaped he would be held responsible for all their misdeeds. So he

decided the matter for himself, and shouted to us, ' Fire on the prisoners.' We fired and killed fifteen of them, after which we drove back their comrades. All that took place during the time of the famous constitution. When the French came back and took it away again, they tried us soldiers because among the presidarios killed there were several royalist gentlemen (caballeros) whom the constitutionalists had put there. Our captain was dead, so they turned upon us. My sentence will soon expire, and as my commandant has confidence in me because my conduct has been good he is sending me to Jaen to give this letter and this dog to the commandant of the presidio."

My guide was a royalist and it was evident that the convict was a constitutionalist; nevertheless, they went along on the best terms possible. When we started on our way again, the spaniel was so tired that the convict was obliged to carry it on his back, wrapped up in his coat. The conversation of this man amused me greatly; while the cigars I gave him, and the luncheon which he had shared with me, had so attached him to me that he was anxious to follow me to Baylen.

" The road is not very safe," he told me. " I will get a gun at Jaen from one of my

friends, and even if we met half a dozen brigands, they should not get as much as a handkerchief from you."

"But," I said to him, "if you do not return to the presidio you run the risk of having your term lengthened by a whole year, perhaps."

"Bah! What's the difference? And then you will give me a certificate attesting that I accompanied you. Besides, I should not feel comfortable if I let you go all alone on that road——"

I should have consented to his accompanying me if he had not fallen out with my guide. And this was the cause of their misunderstanding. Having for eight Spanish leagues kept pace with our horses, which were trotting whenever the condition of the roads allowed it, he took it into his head to declare that he could keep up with them even if they galloped. My guide jeered at this statement. Our horses were not hopelessly bad; we had a quarter of a league of level country before us, and the convict was carrying the dog on his back. He was challenged. We set off, but that possessed creature really had the legs of a mountaineer, and our horses could not outstrip him. The pride of their master could never forgive the presidario for this affront. He stopped speaking to him; and as we had reached

Campillo de Arenas, he made his feeling so apparent that the convict, with the discretion which characterises the Spaniard, understood that his company was not desired, and withdrew.

III

MADRID, *November,* 1830.

SIR: Here I am once more in Madrid after having spent several months travelling north, south, east, and west through Andalusia, that classic land of robbers, without having met one. I had prepared for an attack from robbers, not to defend myself but to talk to them, and to question them very politely on their mode of life. As I look at my coat, threadbare at the elbows, and my exceedingly modest luggage, I deeply regret having missed those gentlemen. The pleasure of meeting them would not have been too dearly paid, by the loss of a light portmanteau.

But if I have not seen any robbers, by way of compensation I have heard nothing else talked about. Postilions and inkeepers tell you most lamentable tales of travellers assassinated, and of women carried away, every time a halt is made

to change mules. The event, of which you are told has always taken place the night before on some part of the road on which you are going to travel. The traveller who does not yet understand Spain, and who has not yet had time to acquire the sublime insouciance of the Castilian *la flema castellana,* no matter how incredulous he may ordinarily be, does not fail to be somewhat impressed by these tales. Day closes, and with far greater rapidity than in our northern climes; here, twilight lasts but a moment; then there comes up, especially near the mountains a wind which would doubtless be warm in Paris, but which, when compared with the heat of the day, seems cold and disagreeable. As you wrap yourself in your cloak, and pull your travelling cap down over your eyes, you notice that the men of your escort throw away the charges of their guns without renewing them. Astonished at this strange proceeding you ask the reason, and those brave hearts, who are accompanying you, answer from the seat where they are perched on the top of the coach, that they have the greatest possible amount of courage, but they can not alone withstand a band of robbers.

"If we are attacked, our only hope of receiving quarter is by proving that we never had any intention of defending ourselves."

Then what is the use of encumbering oneself with these men and their useless guns? Oh! They are excellent as a protection against the *rateros*—that is to say, the amateurs who relieve travellers of their luggage when an opportunity presents itself. Never more than two or three of them are found together.

The traveller then repents having taken so much money with him. He consults his Bréquet watch, to see the time by it for the last time, as he thinks. How glad he would be if he knew that it was safe on his mantelpiece at home! He asks the *mayoral* (conductor) if the robbers take travellers' clothes.

"Sometimes, sir. Last month the diligence from Seville was stopped near Carlota, and all the travellers came into Ecija like so many little angels."

"Little angels! What do you mean?"

"I mean that the bandits had stripped them of all their clothes and had not left them even a shirt."

"The deuce!" cries the traveller, buttoning his coat up tightly. But he becomes somewhat calmer, and even smiles as he notices a young Andalusian woman, one of his fellow travellers, devoutly kissing her thumb and sighing: "Jesus! Jesus!" (Everybody knows that those who kiss

their thumbs after having made the sign of the cross, are always helped by it.)

Dark night has settled down upon us; but fortunately a brilliant moon is rising in a cloudless sky. We can just see in the distance the entrance to a terrible mountain gorge which is not less than half a league long.

"Mayoral, is that the place where the diligence was stopped once before?"

"Yes, sir, and a traveller was killed. Postilion," continues the mayoral, "don't crack your whip for fear of warning them."

"Warning whom?" asks the traveller.

"The robbers," answers the mayoral.

"The deuce!" cries the traveller.

"Oh, sir, please look down there at the turn of the road, are those not men? They are hiding in the shadow of that great rock."

"Yes, madam; one, two, three, four, five, six men on horseback."

"Ah! Jesus, Jesus!" (Sign of the cross and kisses on her thumbs.)

"Mayoral, can you see down there?"

"Yes."

"I see one of them holding a big stick, perhaps it is a gun."

"Yes, it is a gun."

"Do you think that they are some of the good

people (*buena gente*)?" our young Andalusian asks anxiously.

"Who can tell!" answers the mayoral, shrugging his shoulders, and drawing down the corners of his mouth.

"Then heaven forgive us all!" and she hides her face on the shoulder of the traveller who is doubly moved.

The coach is going like the wind; eight sturdy mules at a fast trot. The horsemen stop, they draw up in a line—to bar our way? No! they open up their ranks; three to the right, and three to the left of the road. Evidently they wish to surround the coach on all sides.

"Postilion, stop your mules if those men give the order. Whatever you do, don't bring a shower of shot down upon us."

"You can depend upon it, sir, I have as great interest in the matter as you."

At last we are so near that we can already distinguish the broad hats, Turkish saddles, and white leather gaiters of the six horsemen. If we could only distinguish their features, what eyes! what beards! what scars we should behold! There can no longer be any doubt that they are robbers, for they have guns.

The first robber touches the brim of his broad hat, and says in a quiet, grave voice, "*Vayan*

Uds. con Dios" (Go in the name of God)! This is the greeting which travellers exchange on the road. *"Vayan Uds. con Dios,"* the other travellers repeat in turn, and politely turn aside to allow the coach to pass; for they are honest farmers who have stayed late at the market at Ecija, and who are travelling in a company and armed on account of the widespread fear of robbers, already mentioned.

After a few encounters of this kind one soon becomes very sceptical as to the existence of robbers. One grows so accustomed to the rather wild-looking faces of the peasants that real brigands would seem merely honest peasants who had neglected to shave for some time. A young Englishman whom I met at Granada had for a long time travelled over some of the worst roads in Spain without the slightest accident, until he vigorously denied the existence of robbers. One day he was stopped by two ill-favoured looking men armed with guns. He at once supposed that they were peasants indulging in horseplay, who thought that they would get a little fun by frightening the traveller. Each time that they called upon him to hand over his money, he laughed and answered that he saw through their trick and that they could not get the better of him. He could not see his error

until one of the real bandits gave him a blow with the stock of his gun—such a blow, that three months later the Englishman still carried the scar.

Except in very rare cases Spanish brigands never maltreat travellers. Often they merely seize the money which the travellers carry about them, without opening trunks, or even searching them. Still, that is not to be always counted upon. A young dandy from Madrid was going to Cadiz with two dozen fine shirts which he had ordered from London. The brigands stopped him near Carlota, and after taking all that he had in his purse, without mentioning the rings, chains, and love souvenirs, which so popular a young man could not fail to have, the robber-chief politely called his attention to the fact that as his band were obliged to avoid the more populous districts, their linen was in sore need of being sent to the laundry. The shirts were spread out and admired. Then the captain, saying, like Hali of the Sicilian: "Between knights such a liberty is permissible," he put a few into his sack, then took off the black rags which he had been wearing for six weeks at least, and joyfully arrayed himself in his prisoner's finest linen. Each robber did the same; so that the unhapy traveller not only found him-

self despoiled of his own wardrobe, but also in possession of a heap of rags which he would not have dared touch with the end of his cane. In addition he had to endure the jests of the brigands. The captain, with the mocking gravity which the Andalusian can so well assume, said in taking leave of him, that he would never forget the service just rendered, that he would make all possible haste to return the shirts lent him, and that he would take back his own linen as soon as he had the honour of meeting the traveller again.

"Above all," he added, "do not forget to have these gentlemen's shirts washed; we can then get them from you on your way back from Cadiz."

The young man who told me about this robbery, of which he had been the victim, assured me that he could have forgiven the robbers the loss of the shirts more readily than their malicious jests.

At different times the Spanish Government has made serious efforts to clear the highways of the robbers who since time immemorial have been in possession of the public ways. They have never succeeded in obtaining decisive results. One band would be exterminated, but immediately another would be formed. Some-

times a Captain General would succeed after great effort in stamping out all the robbers in his district; but then the surrounding districts would be overflowing.

The nature of the country, bristling with mountains, and without well-laid roads, makes it very difficult to exterminate the brigands. In Spain, as in La Vendée, there is a large number of isolated farmsteads, *aldeas,* several miles distant from any inhabitated spot. By garrisoning all these farmsteads and all the little hamlets the brigands would speedily be obliged to surrender themselves,—but when would it be possible to find money enough, soldiers enough?

The owners of the *aldeas,* so one feels, try to keep on good terms with the brigands, whose vengeance is greatly to be feared. On the other hand, the highwaymen, depending upon the farmers for their sustenance, spare them, pay them well for what they need, and sometimes even share their booty with them. I must add that the profession of highwayman is in general not considered in any way a disgrace. To steal upon the highroads is in the eyes of many to offer opportunities to protest against tyrannical laws. Now a man who, with nothing but his gun, is daring enough to hurl defiance at the Government, is a hero whom the men respect and the

women admire. Certainly it is glorious to be able to cry in words of the old ballad:

A todos los desafie,
Pues á nadie tengo miedo!

A brigand generally begins by being a smuggler. His business is disturbed by the revenue officer. It is a crying injustice to nine-tenths of the population that they should torment a fine fellow, who sells cheap, better cigars than those of the King, and who brings back silkstuffs for the women, English merchandise, and all the gossip from a circuit of ten leagues. If a revenue officer succeeds in killing or taking a smuggler's horse, the smuggler is ruined. He must seek vengeance, so he becomes a highwayman. You ask what has become of a fine young fellow whom you noticed some months before and who was the cock of the village.

"Alas!" answers a woman, "he was forced to take to the mountains. It was not his fault, poor lad! He was so gentle! Heaven protect him!"

These kindly souls hold the Government responsible for all the misdeeds of the robbers. "The Government," they say, "drives the poor people to despair, when all they ask is to be allowed to be left alone, and live quietly by following their trade."

The model of the Spanish brigand, the prototype of the hero of the highroad, the Robin Hood, the Roque Guinar of our time, is the famous José Maria, nicknamed *el Tempranito*—the Early. He is the man most spoken of from Madrid to Seville, from Seville to Malaga. Handsome, brave, courteous in so far as a robber can be—such is José Maria. If he stops a diligence, he hands the ladies out with quite an air, and is careful to find them comfortable seats in the shade, for it is usually by day that he performs the most of his exploits. Never an oath, never a coarse word; quite, on the contrary, almost respectful consideration, and a natural politeness which never fails. If he takes a ring from a lady's finger: "Ah, madam," he says, "so fair a hand has no need of ornaments."

José Maria has been described to me as a tall young man, from twenty-five to thirty years old, well built, with an open and smiling countenance, teeth white as pearls, and remarkably expressive eyes. He usually wears a sumptuously rich majo's costume. His linen is always spotlessly clean, and his hands would do credit to a young dandy in London or Paris.

It is not more than five or six years since he began to hunt the highroads. He was

destined by his parents for the Church, and he studied theology at the University at Granada; but his vocation was not very strong, for one night he entered the house of a young lady of good family. "Love," they say, "excuses much" . . . but there was talk of violence of a servant who was wounded. . . . I have never been able to make much out of this story. The father made loud complaint, and criminal proceedings were begun. José Maria was compelled to fly and to hide himself in Gibraltar. There, as he found himself in need of money, he made a bargain with an English trader to smuggle a large amount of contraband goods. He was betrayed by a man to whom he had confided his plans. The revenue officers knew the road he was to follow, and they lay in wait for him. All his mules were taken; but he gave them up only after a fierce struggle in which he killed and wounded several officers. From that time on his only resource was to take prisoners for the ransom they would pay.

The most extraordinary good luck has accompanied him up to the present day. A price has been put on his head, a description of him is posted up on every town-gate, with the promise of 8,000 reals reward to any one—even an

accomplice—delivering him up to justice dead or alive.*

Nevertheless, José Maria still follows unharmed his dangerous profession, and his trips extend from the frontier of Portugal to the Kingdom of Murcia. His band is not large, but it is composed of men of long proven fidelity and resolution. One day at the head of a band of a dozen picked men he surprised at the *Venta de Gazin* twenty royalist volunteers who had been sent in his pursuit and he disarmed them all. Then they saw him very deliberately go back to the mountains driving before him two mules and loaded with seventy carabines as if he were going to make a trophy.

Wonderful tales are told of his marksmanship. With his horse going at full gallop he could hit the trunk of an olive-tree at one hundred and fifty paces. The following incident will give an idea of his skill and also of his generosity.

A certain Captain Castro, an officer of great courage and zeal who pursued robbers, they say, quite as much to satisfy personal vengeance as to carry out his military duties, learned through one of his spies that José Maria could be found

* When I was at Seville, they found one morning on the gate of Triana, beneath the description of José Maria, these words written in pencil, "Signature of the above: José Maria."

on a certain day in a lonely *aldea* where he had a mistress. Castro, on the day indicated, mounted his horse, and, in order not to excite suspicion by bringing too many men into the field, he took with him only four lancers. But no matter how great the precaution exercised in concealing his advance, he could not prevent José Maria's learning of it. Just as Castro, after having passed through a deep gorge, was about to enter the valley in which was situated the *aldea* of his enemy's mistress, twelve well-mounted horsemen appeared on his flank much nearer the gorge, which was the only way of retreat. The lancers gave themselves up for lost. A man mounted on a bay horse separated himself from the group of robbers, and reined up his horse sharply a hundred paces from Castro.

"You can not surprise José Maria!" he cried. "Captain Castro, what have I done that you wish to give me up to justice? I might kill you, but men of feeling have become rare, and I will spare your life. Here is a souvenir that will teach you to avoid me. Look out for your helmet."

So speaking, he took aim, and sent a ball through the captain's helmet. The next instant, wheeling his horse about, he disappeared.

Yet another instance of his courtesy. A wedding was being celebrated on a farm near Andujar. The bride and bridegroom had already received their friends' congratulations, and they were just going to sit down to the wedding-feast under a great fig-tree in front of the house. Every one was in the best of spirits, and the perfume of jasmine and orange flowers mingled pleasantly with the more substantial fragrance of the abundant viands which covered the table. Suddenly a man appeared on horseback, from out a little clump of trees, a pistol-shot from the house. The stranger sprang lightly to the ground, waved his hand to the guests and led his horse around to the stable. No other guest was expected, but in Spain every one who passes by is welcome to share a feast. Moreover, the stranger, to judge from his dress, was a man of importance. The bridegroom at once stepped forward to invite him to the dinner.

While the guests were whispering together and asking who the stranger could be, the notary from Andalusia, who was present at the wedding, became pale as death. He tried to rise from the chair which he was occupying near the bride; but his knees knocked together and his legs trembled so that he could scarcely bear the

weight of his body. One of the guests who had long been suspected of being a smuggler approached the bride:

"That is José Maria," he said. "I am greatly mistaken if he is not here for some mischief (*para hacer una muerta*). He has a grudge against the notary."

"But what is to be done? Help him to escape?"

"Impossible! José Maria would overtake him in no time."

"Arrest the brigand?"

"His band is doubtless nearby; besides, he has his pistols at his belt, and his dagger never leaves him."

"But tell us, notary, what did you do to him?"

"Alas! nothing, absolutely nothing!"

Some one whispered that the notary had told his farmer two months before that if José Maria ever came to ask for a drink he must put a good strong dose of arsenic in the wine.

They were still consulting together, without beginning the *olla,* when the stranger reappeared, followed by the bridegroom. There could no longer be any doubt—it was José Maria. As he passed by the notary he cast upon him so fierce a glance that the wretched man began to

shiver as if he had a chill. Then he very gracefully saluted the bride and asked permission to dance at the wedding. She was very careful not to refuse, or to show him any but a friendly countenance. José Maria at once took an oaken stool, drew it up to the table, and without ceremony seated himself beside the bride, between her and the notary, who seemed on the point of fainting.

The feast was begun. José Maria showed his hostess every little attention and courtesy. When a fine wine was served, the bride taking a glass of Montilla (which to my mind is better than Xeres), touched it to her lips, and offered it to the bandit. This is a mark of honour, shown at table to persons whom it is particularly desired to single out for attention. They call it *una fineza.* Unfortunately, this usage is dying out in good society, eager here as elsewhere to despoil itself of all national customs.

José Maria took the glass, thanked the bride most profusely, and declared that his hope was that she would consider him her servant and that it would afford him the greatest pleasure to do anything that she commanded.

Then, trembling with fear, she leaned over toward her terrible neighbour and timidly whispered in his ear:

"Grant me one favour?"

"A thousand," cried José Maria.

"Forget, I beg you, the grudge which you have perchance brought here. Promise me that for love of me you will pardon your enemies and that there will be no scandal at my wedding."

"Notary," said José Maria, turning toward the trembling limb of the law, "you must thank this lady. But for her I would have killed you before you had time to digest your dinner. Don't be afraid, however; I'll not a harm a hair of your head."

And, pouring out a glass of wine, he added with a slightly malicious simle: "Come, notary, drink to my health. This wine is good and it is not poisoned."

The wretched notary felt as if he were swallowing a hundred pins.

"Come, children!" cried the brigand, "let us be merry! (*Vaga de droma!*) Long life to the bride!"

And quickly rising, he ran to find a guitar, and began to improvise a couplet in honour of the bride and groom.

In short, during the rest of the dinner and the ball which followed, he made himself so agreeable that there were tears in the women's eyes as they thought that so delightful a lad

might some day end on the gallows. He danced, he sang, he was all things to all men. Toward midnight, a little girl about twelve years old, half clad in miserable rags, went up to José Maria and said a few words to him in the language of the gypsies. José Maria started; then he hastened to the stable, whence he immediately returned bringing with him his good horse. Then, with the bridle over his arm, he stepped up to the bride:

"Farewell," said he, "child of my soul (*hija de mi alma*). Never shall I forget the moments I have spent by your side; they are the happiest since many a long year. Will you be gracious enough to accept this trifle from a poor scamp who would be glad to have a mine to give to you?" At the same time he presented her with a beautiful ring.

"José Maria," cried the bride, "as long as there is a crust of bread in this house you may claim one half."

The robber shook hands with all the guests, even with the notary, kissed all the women; then lightly swinging himself into his saddle he went back to his mountains. Then only did the notary breathe freely. Half an hour later a detachment of soldiers arrived. But no one had seen the man for whom they were looking.

The Spanish common people, who know by heart the ballads of the *Douze Pairs,* who sing the exploits of Renaud de Montauban, must of necessity be greatly interested in the only man who in an age as prosaic as that in which we live, is the embodiment of the knightly virtues of the heroes of old. Still another reason adds to the popularity of José Maria; he is very open-handed. Money is easily gained and he spends it very freely upon the unfortunate. Never, it is said, has a poor man applied to him without receiving abundant charity.

A muleteer told me that having lost his mule, his only means of livelihood, he was going to drown himself in the Guadalquivir, when a box containing six ounces of gold was handed to his wife by some unknown person. He never doubted that it was a present from José Maria, to whom he had pointed out a ford one day when he was hard pressed by some soldiers who were pursuing him.

I will finish this long letter with another instance of the charity of my hero.

A certain poor pedler from around about Campello de Arenas was taking a load of vinegar to town. This vinegar was contained in leathern bottles, as is the custom of the country, and carried by a little thin ass, with its hair

all rubbed off and half dead with hunger. In a narrow path a stranger, who from his costume one would take for a hunter, met the vinegar-seller and as soon as he saw the donkey burst out laughing.

"What scarecrow is that that you have got, friend?" cried he. "You look as if you were going to take part in a carnival. The animal is a perfect joke."

And he kept on laughing.

"Sir," the man answered sadly, cut to the quick, "this beast, ugly as though may be, earns me my bread. I am down in my luck and I have no money to buy another."

"What," cried the jester, "this dreadful little donkey keeps you from dying of hunger? But it won't hold out for more than a week. Here," he continued, handing him a rather heavy bag, "old Herrera has a fine mule to sell; it is worth fifteen hundred reals. You will find that sum in this. Buy the mule without delay to-day, and don't haggle over the price. If I find you to-morrow on the road with this frightful little donkey, as sure as my name is José Maria, I'll heave you both over the side of the precipice." The donkey driver, when he found himself alone with the bag in his hand, thought that he must be dreaming. The fifteen hundred

reals were there, however, and no mistake in the counting. He knew that José Maria was a man of his word and he hastened to Herrera's and exchanged his reals for a fine mule.

The next night Herrera wakened with a start. Two men stood over him with a dagger and a dark lantern.

"Come, out with your money—quick!"

"Alas, my good sirs, I have not a *quarto* in the house."

"That is a lie; you sold a mule for fifteen hundred reals, which sum a certain man in Campillo paid over to you."

They brought forward arguments that were so irresistible that the fifteen hundred reals were soon surrendered, or if you prefer it, returned.

P. S.—José Maria died some years ago. In 1833, upon the occasion of the coronation of the young queen, Isabella, King Ferdinand issued a general amnesty, of which the celebrated bandit wished to take advantage. The Government even gave him a pension of two reals a day if he would keep the peace. As this sum was not sufficient for the needs of a man who had many elegant vices, he was obliged to accept a position offered him by the *Diligence* company. He became *escopetero* and saw to it that the coaches,

which he had so often ransacked, were carefully respected. All went well for a time. His old comrades feared or spared him. But one day some unusually resolute bandits stopped the diligence from Seville, although José Maria was with it. He harangued them from the box-seat; and the influence which he had over his old accomplices was such that they seemed disposed to withdraw without violence, when the leader of the robbers, known by the name of "Gypsy" (*el Gitano*), formerly a lieutenant of José Maria's, went close up to him, fired on him, and killed him instantly.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 949 939 3

BUI

Uni
S